

Translated
by
RAGHUNATHAN

Srimad-Bhāgavatam

SRIMAD BHĀGAVATAM

Translated
by
N. RAGHUNATHAN

VOL. I

VPh

VIGHNESWARA PUBLISHING HOUSE
MADRAS 1 • BANGALORE 55

Mr. N. Raghunathan is a brilliant writer, a profound scholar in English and Sanskrit and the doyen of Indian journalism. He is an M.A. of the Madras University with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature. After 30 years as Assistant Editor of the **Hindu**, the well-known national English daily of Madras, he retired as its chief editorial executive in 1957 and has since been engaged in Sanskrit and Indological studies. He has published **Sotto Voce**, a four-volume collection of weekly cause-ries, which he contributed to a Madras weekly from 1946 to 1959. It has won for him recognition as one of the foremost Indian writers of English, with an individual style, provocative, witty and memorable, and as a student of affairs with uncanny political insight and a deep commitment to the abiding values of Indian culture. His Madras University Lectures on **Reason and Intuition in Indian Culture** won appreciation as a book that highlights the dynamic quality of Hinduism and 'can contribute significantly to the understanding of traditional Indian religion and culture.'

In addition to the **Bhagavatam**, Mr. Raghunathan has translated the entire Valmiki Ramayanam in English prose and a selection of the longer poems of old Tamil in verse. He is currently at work on the rendering of Kalidasa's poems in English verse.

Srimad - Bhagavatam, traditionally accepted as one of the eighteen 'great Puranas', is the Bhakti scripture par excellence. It has inspired the growth of extensive devotional literature not only in Sanskrit but also in many other Indian languages ; and it is revered by important religious movements as one of the corner-stones of their faith. Though it has been translated into practically every Indian language, European scholars, with the notable exception of the French scholar Burnouf who translated parts of it over a hundred years ago, have not turned their attention to it. Many distinguished European scholars have expressed the view that there is need for an authentic new translation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, which in the words of Prof. D. H. Ingalls stands out by reason of 'its literary excellence, the organisation that it brings to its vast material and the effect that it has had on later writers'.

The present work, based on a careful comparison of the different textual traditions as reflected in the numerous commentaries, aims at providing a reliable and authentic translation in euphonious, lucid prose, which shall be idiomatic, faithful and exact without being too literal (or word for word). It provides, besides, all the explanatory material that the general reader might require for a full appreciation of the text, a minimum of foot-notes, a glossary, brief biographical notes and a select subject index, as well as a synopsis of the contents (for Volume One). The special notes at the end should be found helpful by the student and the specialist.

This translation should convey to the reader something of the extraordinary poetic quality of the original and of the aroma of mystic devotion, which is the secret of the **Bhagavatam's** perennial popularity.

The second volume opens with two books. The Eighth contains two universally popular stories, that of the lordly tusker that was saved from the crocodile, and the churning of the ocean of milk for nectar, as well as the elevating account of Bali, whose staunchness in truth could not be shaken by all the arts that the Lord could summon. The Ninth Book embroiders on the theme 'And now let us praise famous men'. We hear of Chyavana, the sage, and Sukanya, his loyal spouse, of Ambarisha and Durvasas, of Harischandra and Pururavas, of Yayati and Sri Rama, the story of whose life is a jewel-like cameo. But in this volume it is Sri Krishna that holds the centre of the stage. The Divine child of Vrndavana, the darling of the Gopis, the Protector of Righteousness, the teacher of the transcendental wisdom and the comrade of Kuchela—the myriad facets of God Who came as man and yet remained indisputably God—are displayed with rare art in the famous Tenth and Eleventh Books by that connoisseur of the spirit in its heights and its depths, the sage Suka.

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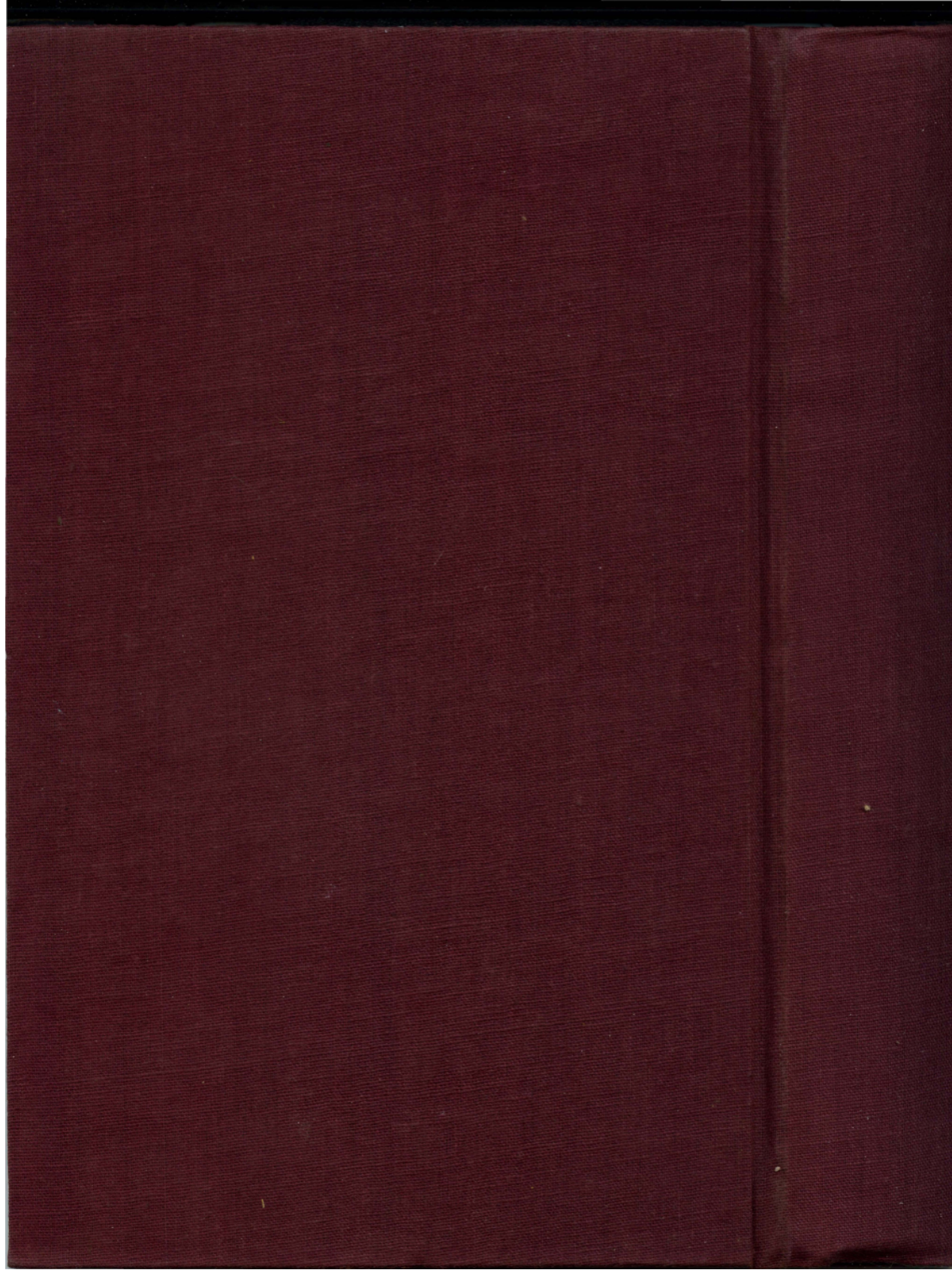
Srimad-Bhagavatam

Translated

by

N. RAHUNATHAN

VOL. I



SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

*To the shining company of saints
who light the flame of divine love
in the hearts of men*

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SRIMAD BHĀGAVATAM

Vol. I

GOD AND THE WORLD : Books 1 to 7

WITH NOTES FROM A DOZEN COMMENTARIES

Translated from the Sanskrit

by

N. RAGHUNATHAN



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PREFACE

Srimad-Bhagavatam enjoys universal popularity as the Bhakti scripture par excellence. It has inspired the growth of extensive devotional literature not only in Samskrit but also in many other Indian languages; and it is revered by important religious movements like those connected with the names of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Vallabhacharya as one of the corner-stones of their faith. Though it has been translated into practically every Indian language, European scholars, with the notable exception of the French scholar Burnouf, who translated parts of it over a hundred years ago, have not turned their attention to it. Prof. Juan Roger Reviere, Prof. of Indology in the University of Madrid, writes in *Purana*, 'The Puranas are forgotten and neglected in European Indology', and complains that there is no adequate translation of the *Bhagavatam*.

One reason at least for the paucity of good translations, so far at the *Bhagavatam* is concerned, is its difficult style, to which Prof. S. N. Das-Gupta refers in his *Indian Philosophy*; not less of a deterrent, perhaps, is another quality of the Purana to which he also refers, its sublime if uneven poetry. It is in this respect almost unique among the Puranas (which are usually pedestrian in style), standing out, as Prof. Ingalls says, 'by reason of its literary excellence, the organisation that it brings to its vast material and the effect that it has had on later writers'.

Much of the difficulty in interpreting the *Bhagavatam* is due to the unsettled state of the text. The Oriental Institute, Baroda, has undertaken the production of a critical edition, but it may take years before the project is completed. The present translation, based on a comparison of the texts relied upon by the principal commentaries, aims at providing an authentic rendering in euphonious, lucid prose, a version which shall be idiomatic, faithful and exact without being too literal (or word for word). The foot-notes, kept to a minimum, give important variant readings; and since the text is often elliptical, they

also offer brief elucidations of important passages and suggest connecting links. With the text itself no liberty is taken. The supply within brackets of the more familiar for the less familiar name of a god or hero should be of help to the non-Sanskritist.

The *Bhagavatam* is almost unique in the number of commentaries and dissertations it has inspired down the ages (see. p. 654, *infra*). No translator can afford to neglect them. Almost every commentary attempts the elucidation of the text in the light of a particular school of philosophy. While this translation has tried to follow the plain meaning of the text uninfluenced by the bias of any particular commentator, it endeavours, where it has to follow one particular interpretation as being the most plausible, to give in summary in the Notes at the end the interpretations of others. But in this respect these Notes do not claim to be either comprehensive or exhaustive. The Notes have also been utilized to give brief summaries of the extensive additions to the text that are found, notably in the Madhva version, and to indicate the rather fewer omissions from what may, for convenience, be termed the Vulgate, that used by Sridharaswamin.

The synopsis provided for Vol. I (Vol. II hardly needs one), the select subject index, the glossary of Sanskrit words (which are kept at a minimum in the text and printed with a minimum number of diacritical marks) and the brief notes on important characters and events, should help the reader to find his way through the labyrinth of Puranic mythology, and the difficulties caused by the sea-saw technique of narration and the employment of more than one narrator. The translation aims to serve the general reader, without neglecting the needs of the student.

The unique popularity of the *Bhagavatam* is due to the fact that the mysticism of loving devotion, which goes back to the Veda, finds its consummation in the extraordinarily vivid portrayal of the Divine Personality of Sri Krishna, the Spirit of Delight, the Ananda of the Upanishads. It is hoped that the translation may succeed in communicating to the reader something of its haunting beauty and compelling charm.

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SYNOPSIS

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- CH. I : The sages assembled at Naimisa question the Suta-Pauranika on the chief topics of the *Bhagavatam*.
- CH. II : The Suta on the blessedness of hearing and speaking of the Lord. The glory of devotion.
- CH. III : Some of the chief incarnations of Vishnu, beginning with the Purusha, described, 'Krishna is Bhagavan Himself'; not a mere incarnation. The truth about the body and the Self and the way of release from Maya.
- CH. IV : The genesis of the *Bhagavatam*. Vyasa's dissatisfaction with his own life's work.
- CH. V : Narada tells him that though he had dealt extensively with Dharma and other ends of life, he had not dilated on the Lord's greatness. He recalls his own life in a previous birth. The value of Sat-sanga. How Karma leads to Jnana and Bhakti.
- CH. VI : Narada tells of his penance, the Lord's blessing and his rebirth as Brahma's son. He exhorts Vyasa to sing Vishnu's praises.
- CH. VII : The Suta begins his tale. Vyasa's composition of the *Bhagavatam*. Asvatthama kills Draupadi's children. His capture and disgrace at Arjuna's hands.
- CH. VIII : Krishna saves Parikshit in his mother's womb from Aswatthama's weapon. Kunti extols Him. Yudhishtira's dejection and self-reproach.
- CH. IX : The Pandavas and Krishna call on Bhishma fallen on the battle-field. He exhorts Yudhishtira to do his duty as King. He expounds Dharma. His hymn to Krishna and his death.
- CH. X : Yudhishtira on the throne. Krishna leaves for Dwaraka. The Kuru women extol Him and proclaim His divinity.
- CH. XI : Joyous reception at Mathura. His progress through the city. Reunion with His spouses.
- CH. XII : Birth of Parikshit. Astrologers foretell his future greatness and the manner of his end. Yudhishtira's horse-sacrifices.
- CH. XIII : Vidura returns from pilgrimage. He retires secretly along with Dhrtarashtra and Gandhari to the forest, where Dhrtarashtra and Gandhari die.
- CH. XIV : Arjuna's long absence at Dwaraka. Yudhishtira worried by dire portents.
- CH. XV : Arjuna returns. He tells of the Yadus' death at each other's hands and the passing of Krishna and Balarama. The Pandavas start on their last journey, after crowning Parikshit.
- CH. XVI : The Kali Age begins. Parikshit's world conquest. He meets Dharma and the earth, disguised as a bull and a cow, and speaking of their misfortunes under Kali.
- CH. XVII : Parikshit sees him, dressed up as King and harassing the cow and the bull. He resolves to slay Kali, then relents and tells him to live where men succumb to five specified vices.
- CH. XVIII : Parikshit in a moment of anger is guilty of disrespect to the sage Samika. His son Srngi curses him, saying that Takshaka shall bite him within nine days.

- CH. XIX: Parikshit begins a fast unto death on the Ganga, where the sages assemble to see his penance. Suka comes there by chance. Parikshit prays for enlightenment.

BOOK II

- CH. I: Suka says that *bhakti* is indispensable for *mukti*. He describes how yogis control the mind by meditating on the cosmic form of the Lord.
- CH. II: How to focus the mind, thus controlled, on the Lord, the Inner Ruler, in worship. The yogi's modes of departure from life. Instant release and release in due course.
- CH. III: The worship of different gods and the fruits thereof. The supreme gain is devotion to Vishnu, leading to *moksha*.
- CH. IV: Suka invokes Vishnu's blessings before reciting the *Bhagavatam*.
- CH. V: Narada questions Brahma on the origin of the universe. Brahma dwells on the supremacy of Vishnu and says that He is all. The creation of the *tattvas* and of the cosmic egg, utilizing time, *karma* and other powers.
- CH. VI: The origin of the Purusha and His glorious attributes described in terms of the *Purusha Sukta*. How the features of all individual bodies derive from the Virat. The two paths, *Pravrtti* and *Nivrtti*. Brahma sacrifices to the Lord with materials gathered from the Purusha's body.
- CH. VII: Twenty-four of the principal incarnations of Vishnu and their exploits described. True devotees pass beyond the Lord's power of Maya. His essential form is knowledge and bliss, and He is, too, the dispenser of the fruits of *karma*.
- CH. VIII: Parikshit, puzzled by the connection of the body with the *jiva* and *Isvara*, questions Suka.
- CH. IX: The *jiva's* bondage through Maya and liberation through Self-knowledge. The Lord reveals these truths to Brahma when the latter has practised penance for a hundred years and been vouchsafed sight of Vaikuntha and its residents. The substance of the *Bhagavatam's* teaching summarised in four verses in the words of the Lord. Brahma imparts it to Narada.
- CH. X: The ten features of a Purana. How the senses and the gods presiding over them came to be differentiated in the body of the cosmic Purusha.

BOOK III

- CH. I: Suka recalls how Vidura, insulted by Duryodhana, leaves the capital and goes on a pilgrimage. At Prabhasa he hears of the destruction of the Kauravas.
- CH. II: Later Uddhava tells him of the Yadavas' perishing at each other's hands and Sri Krishna and Balarama having gone back to Vaikuntha.
- CH. III: The grieving Uddhava recalls the exploits of the Lord on earth. He tells of the sages' cursing the Yadus for the misbehaviour of some of their youths.

- CH. IV : The Yadavas go on a pilgrimage to Pindaraka. In a drunken brawl they all perish. The Lord imparts knowledge of the Self to Uddhava and leaves for Vaikuntha.
- CH. V : Vidura finds Maitreya at Haridwar. The latter instructs him in the higher knowledge. He describes the creation by the Lord of the *tattvas*. Being unable to create the world, the deities presiding over them pray to the Lord for knowledge.
- CH. VI : Under His advice and inspired by Him they fractionally combine and produce the cosmic egg. The Lord enters the lifeless egg and awakes in it the cosmic Purusha and differentiates his limbs and faculties.
- CH. VII : Vidura asks Maitreya how the jiva, whose essence is freedom, could experience bondage. Maitreya explains the role of Maya.
- CH. VIII : Maitreya relates how Brahma, the Creator, appeared in the world-lotus sprung from the navel of Narayana lying on the waters in the cosmic egg. His *tapas* and vision of Narayana.
- CH. IX : He extols the Lord, Who tells him the truth about Himself and asks him to perform *tapas*. He does so.
- CH. X : Brahma drinks up the waters, divides the world lotus into three, constituting earth, the empyrean and heaven. The ten kinds of creation described.
- CH. XI : The nature of time, its divisions and measurement. The four-yuga cycles. The life-spans of the Manus. The Naimittika-pralaya at the end of each day of Brahma's life.
- CH. XII : Brahma's special creations: The modes of nescience; the boy-sages; Rudra and His progeny; the ten patriarchs. The Vedas issue from Brahma's mouth. The *varnas* and *asramas*. The sciences, metres and speech. Brahma's body splits into two, giving birth to Swayambhuva Manu and Satarupa. Creation by the union of sexes begins.
- CH. XIII : The earth submerged in the deluge of Pralaya. A boar cub issues from Brahma's nostril. The Lord incarnate as the boar plunges into the water. He brings up the submerged earth, despatching with a blow Hiranyaksha who seeks to prevent Him.
- CH. XIV : The story of how he and his brother were born. Diti importunes her husband Kasyapa at an improper hour, impelled by passion. She conceives the two wicked Asuras.
- CH. XV : These are Jaya and Vijaya, Vishnu's attendants in Vaikuntha, who were cursed by the boy sages Sanaka and his brothers for preventing them from entering the Lord's sanctum. The Lord endorses the curse.
- CH. XVI : The sages depart. The Lord tells His attendants that they shall come back to Vaikuntha after three births in which they would 'concentrate their minds on Him in anger'.
- CH. XVII : Birth of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha. The latter, not finding the gods in heaven, arrogantly challenges Varuna, and is directed by him to seek out the Lord.
- CH. XVIII : The encounter between Vishnu and Hiranyaksha in greater detail. The latter provokes Him with taunts. The gods pray for his death.

- CH. XIX : The Asura's sorceries are powerless. He is despatched with a blow.
- CH. XX : Brahma's other creations. The progeny of nescience. Yakshas and Rakshasas. The principal gods. The Asuras. The demi-gods. The spirits and the ghouls. The manes. The reptiles. The Manus and the Rishis.
- CH. XXI : The patriarch Kardama's *tapas* for progeny. The Lord directs him to marry Manu's daughter. Manu, his wife and daughter come to his hermitage.
- CH. XXII : Kardama marries Devahuti.
- CH. XXIII : Kardama, by his yogic power, rejuvenates Devahuti, and enjoys with her heavenly pleasures. Taking nine different bodies, he begs nine daughters on her.
- CH. XXIV : The Lord is incarnate as Kapila, son of Kardama. Kardama gives away his daughters in marriage and goes to the penitential woods.
- CH. XXV : Devahuti prays to Kapila for enlightenment. He teaches that mind-control is essential. Association with the saintly leads to the shedding of attachments and the love of God. The *bhakta* prizes devotion more than *moksha* itself.
- CH. XXVI : Knowledge of the *tattvas* leads to the destruction of the ego. Kapila explains the nature of and distinction between Prakrti and Purusha. The number of *tattvas*. The evolution of the world from Prakrti described.
- CH. XXVII : How to control the mind. Freedom from the hold of Prakrti comes with devotion.
- CH. XXVIII : The practice of Ashtanga-yoga. Meditation on a chosen object. Breath-control makes the mind steady. Concentration on the conceptual image of the Lord. This leads to intense love and the mind dies down.
- CH. XXIX : The practice of *bhakti*. The devotee comes to see God everywhere, and reverence and love Him in every creature.
- CH. XXX : To induce vairagya Kapila enlarges on the miseries of the worldling in life and after death.
- CH. XXXI : He describes the sufferings of the *jiva* in the mother's womb, and his tribulations and disappointments as child, boy and man.
- CH. XXXII : The performance of karma for the fruits, trivial and evanescent, involves one in *samsara*. Devotion brings detachment and the intuition of the Self. Kapila concludes his teaching.
- CH. XXXIII : Devahuti, practising yoga, attains *moksha*.

BOOK IV

- CH. I : Manu's three daughters. The progeny of Akuti. The exploits of the Lord incarnate as Yajna. Kardama's daughter Anasuya, wife of Atri, has three sons, Soma, Datta and Durvasas by the grace of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. The family of Daksha and Prasuti. Vishnu is born of Murti, wife of Dharma, as the sage Narayana.
- CH. II : Daksha quarrels with the God Siva, Who has married his daughter Sati. He curses Him in the presence of Brahma.

- CH. III and IV : Daksha performs a sacrifice, but does not invite Siva and Sati. Sati goes to the sacrifice in spite of Siva's advice. She is incensed by the disrespect her father shows Siva and burns herself to death by her yogic power.
- CH. V : Siva, hearing of Sati's death, creates Virabhadra, who destroys Daksha's sacrifice, beheads the patriarch, and maims and disfigures the gods and the sages who sided with him.
- CH. VI : The gods led by Brahma, wait upon Siva in Kailasa and pray for forgiveness.
- CH. VII : He relents and allows the sacrifice to be completed. Daksha restored to life, with the head of a goat, praises Him. The Lord Vishnu appears. He points out that Siva and Brahma are not different from Him, and it is ignorance that makes men see difference in the One Brahma.
- CH. VIII : Dhruva, five-year-old son of Manu's son Uttanapada, feels insulted by his step-mother's wounding words. His grieving mother tells him to seek refuge in Vishnu. Narada, who meets him on his way to the forest, teaches him how to meditate. Dhruva's short and severe penance. The Lord appears to him.
- CH. IX : Dhruva's hymn to Vishnu. The Lord blesses Him and says he shall live eternally in the pole star after a long and glorious reign on earth.
- CH. X : Dhruva succeeds his father as emperor. His brother Uttama is killed by the Yakshas. Dhruva wages war against the Yakshas.
- CH. XI : Manu appears on the battle-field and tells his grandson not to wage a war of attrition against the Yakshas.
- CH. XII : Kubera appears and blesses the deferential Dhruva. Dhruva reigns for 36,000 years. Then placing his feet on the head of death, he goes with Vishnu's attendants to his appointed abode. Narada sings his glory.
- CH. XIII : Dhruva's descendants. King Anga, being issueless, offers a sacrifice. A son Vena is born to him by his wife who is Adharma's daughter. His son Vena's cruel ways and intractable nature disgust him, and he leaves his home and disappears.
- CH. XIV : The sages crown Vena King. He sets up a reign of terror and bars sacrifices. The sages destroy him with a snort.
- CH. XV : Appalled by the anarchy that follows, they churn the right hand of the dead Vena, and Prthu, an incarnation of Vishnu, is born, with Archis, his consort, who is Lakshmi incarnate.
- CH. XVI : The bards and chroniclers prophesy his greatness and declare that he is Vishnu incarnate.
- CH. XVII : Finding that the people are without food, Prthu resolves to destroy the earth for withholding its fruits. The earth, taking the form of a cow, explains how the unrighteousness of kings had brought this about.
- CH. XVIII : Prthu, as advised by her, milks the earth, and every class of living being comes to have its appropriate sustenance.
- CH. XIX : Prthu offers a hundred horse sacrifices. Indra obstructs the last, spiriting away the horse. The disguises he adopts, when Prthu's son pursues him and foils his repeated efforts, become the

- breeding-ground of heresies. When Prthu and the priests resolve on slaying Indra, Brahma intervenes.
- CH. XX. The Lord Vishnu appears at the sacrifice and tells Prthu that by devotion to God and by doing his duty as King, he will realize the supreme good.
- CH. XXI: Prthu, engaged in a Sattrra sacrifice, exhorts his people to the practice of their own Dharma. He emphasises that all *harmas* are fruitful only if the Lord Vishnu is pleased.
- CH. XXII: The mind-born sons of Brahma, appear at the sacrifice, and Prthu, welcoming them, asks how eternal welfare may be attained in this very life. Sanatkumara teaches that the love of God and *vairagya* are the means to moksha.
- CH. XXIII: After a long reign Prthu retires with his wife to the penitential woods and gives up his life by yoga. Archis follows him.
- CH. XXIV: Prthu's descendants. Prachinabarhis, a great performer of sacrifices, has ten sons, who go to practise austerities. On the way the God Siva meets them and teaches them a hymn in praise of Vishnu. Reciting it, they practise *tapas*.
- CH. XXV: Narada meets their father and shows him how rites performed with an eye to the fruits must perpetuate *samsara*. The allegory of Puranjana (who stands for the soul guided by the intellect) begins.
- CH. XXVI: The allegory continued. Indulgence in the pleasures of the senses.
- CH. XXVII: The Gandharvas (who stand for the passing of time) ravage Puranjana's city (the body).
- CH. XXVIII: Puranjana is taken captive (that is, dies). He is reborn as the daughter of the King of Vidarbha and marries the Pandyan King. When the latter goes to the forest and dies, and his wife mourns him, Puranjana's life-long companion (the Paramatma) appears to him and reminds him of his true status as the immortal Atman.
- CH. XXIX: Narada explains the allegory in detail to Prachinabarhis, who, disillusioned with the world and with *karma*, practises austerities and attains Vishnu.
- CH. XXX: The Lord appears to his sons and blesses them and tells them to marry the daughter of Kandu and Pramlocha, whom the trees had brought up. They marry her and Daksha is born.
- CH. XXXI: The Prachetases, attaining discriminating wisdom, go to the forest and are taught by Narada how the one Reality may be realized, and in due course reach Vaikuntha.

BOOK V

- CH. I: Manu's eldest son Priyavrata is inclined to withdraw from worldly concerns. Brahma persuades him to take up the responsibilities of rulership. He rules the earth for a long time. The furrows cut by his chariot constantly on the move become the seas dividing the world into seven island continents.
- CH. II: His son Agnidhra, ruling over Jambu-dvipa, falls in love with the Apsaras Poorvachitti. He has nine sons by her. When

his wife leaves for Indra's heaven, he succeeds in getting himself admitted to her world.

- CH. III: His son Nabhi, desiring issue, propitiates Vishnu. The Lord tells him that he would Himself be born as his son.
- CH. IV: The Lord, incarnate as Rshabha, sets an example to his subjects in the pursuit of Dharma. He begets a hundred sons on Jayanti.
- CH. V: On a tour of Brahmavarta, he gives a public discourse on the need to do *karma* without desire for the fruit. He preaches devotion and *vairagya* as the means to subduing the ego. To teach the sages the way of life of the Paramahansas he then leaves home and wanders as an *avadhuta*.
- CH. VI: He is devoured by a forest fire. Misunderstanding his teachings, a ruler of Karnataka (says Suka) will propagate a heretical faith, repudiating the Sanatana Dharma.
- CH. VII: His eldest son Bharata, ruling a long time, performs many sacrifices and becomes a great devotee. He retires to Pulahasrama to live as a contemplative.
- CH. VIII: One day he sees a deer big with young abort and die of the shock of hearing the lion's roar when she is drinking, and he rescues the orphaned fawn. His solicitude for it makes him neglect his devotions and austerities. Grieving for it he dies, and is born as a deer. Remembering his past life, he goes back to Pulahasrama and dies, yearning for liberation.
- CH. IX: He is reborn as the son of a learned Brahmana. Resolving to keep aloof from all worldly concerns, he behaves like an idiot. Working for his brothers in the fields, he is taken away by robbers, who seek to sacrifice him to Bhadrakali. But she, scorched by his Brahmic lustræ, beheads them instead.
- CH. X: He is impressed as a palanquin bearer for King Rahugana. Rebuking him for not keeping in step with the other bearers, the King discovers from his brief and enigmatic retort that he is a Jnani. He questions him humbly.
- CH. XI: Bharata teaches that the uncontrolled mind is the cause of *samsara*.
- CH. XII: He explains that everything other than the Atman is the product of Maya, and that in order to attain Self-knowledge one must serve the saintly and develop devotion to the Lord.
- CH. XIII: Bharata describes the *samsaric* life allegorically as a caravan that never reaches its goal, and advises Rahugana to work for emancipation armed with knowledge and service to Hari.
- CH. XIV: Suka explains the allegory at length.
- CH. XV: Other descendants of Priyavrata. The glory of Gaya, a partial incarnation of Vishnu.
- CH. XVI: The chief divisions of Jambu-dvipa described. Mount Meru and its four supporting mountains. The four trees on these latter and the streams that flow from them.
- CH. XVII: The Ganga, its origin and progress, divided into four streams.
- CH. XVIII: All divisions of Jambu-dvipa other than Bharatavarsha, are places for enjoyment, while Bharata alone is suitable for *karma*.

Vishnu worshipped in all of them under various names, with prayers and praises.

- CH. XIX: The Lord as Nara-Narayana practises *tapas* in Bharata-varsha. Narada worships Him. The sanctity of its mountains and streams.
- CH. XX: The six other island-continent, their rulers, peoples and the forms of the Lord they worship, as well as their mountains and rivers. The seven seas that divide them are also described. The Lokaloka mountain. The seats of Brahma and the Guardians of the worlds.
- CH. XXI: The sun's circuit in the heavens. His chariot with the single wheel. The seven different groups that serve him.
- CH. XXII: The zodiacal belt, the moon and the other planets described.
- CH. XXIII: The pole star and other stars.
- CH. XXIV: The seven worlds below the earth, their rulers, peoples and modes of life. Bali in Sutala. Suka on his greatness.
- CH. XXV: The Lord Ananta in Patala and His glory.
- CH. XXVI: The different hells described. The sins expiated in them.

BOOK VI

- CH. I: The story of Ajamila, the Brahmana who had a concubine and lived by plunder. When Yama's messenger comes to take him, he in terror calls his youngest child, whom he had named Narayana. Thereupon Vishnu's attendants appear and prevent Yama's men seizing him.
- CH. II: Vishnu's attendants tell them that all sins are abolished by uttering the Lord's name consciously or unconsciously. The freed Ajamila, who now repents his dissolute life, cultivates *vairagya* and performs *tapas*, and goes to Vaikuntha.
- CH. III: Yama's messengers, who report to their master what had happened, are told by him that he has no power over those who have cultivated loving devotion to Vishnu.
- CH. IV: Daksha, son of Prachetases, as patriarch, at first creates by his mental efforts alone. As this creation does not prosper, he propitiates Hari by singing the *Hamsa-guhya* hymn. The Lord tells him to marry Asikni and propagate progeny in conjugal union with her.
- CH. V: He begets 10,000 sons, who go to the Narayanasaras for *tapas*. Narada meets them and teaches them the way of withdrawal from the world and devotion to the Lord. Daksha, disappointed, begets another thousand sons. Narada succeeds in dissuading them too from involvement in the world. Daksha curses him to a life of perpetual wandering.
- CH. VI: Daksha then begets sixty daughters and gives them in marriage to the patriarchs Kasyapa and Dharma, to the moon-god and others. Their progeny.
- CH. VII: Indra slights his Guru Brihaspati, who thereupon leaves the gods. The Asuras invade heaven and the gods get Visvarupa, Tvashtha's son, to act as their Guru.

- CH. VIII: He teaches the gods the 'Narayana-Kavacha Mantra', which is fully described. Indra, by its power, vanquishes the Asuras.
- CH. IX: He discovers that Visvarupa has been offering oblations on the sly to the Asuras also, and he cuts off his three heads. Tvashta raises another son Vrttra by magical rites to kill Indra. The gods pray to Vishnu for succour. He advises them to ask the sage Dadichi for his backbone.
- CH. X: Armed with the Vajra fashioned from his bones by Visvakarma, Indra attacks the Asuras, who are worsted.
- CH. XI: Vrttra fights with Indra. His wonderful devotion to Vishnu comes out in his challenge to the foe.
- CH. XII: The Vajra falls from Indra's nerveless hands. He is impressed by Vrttra's equanimity. He slays him with the Vajra.
- CH. XIII: Indra is pursued by the sin of Brahmana-murder and goes into hiding. The gods purify him by conducting the horse-sacrifice.
- CH. XIV: Vrttra's past birth as Chitraketu. The king gets a son by the grace of Angiras. His other wives, jealous of the queen's luck, murder the child. The parents' lament.
- CH. XV: The sages Angiras and Narada come there and console them, pointing out the evanescence of all things.
- CH. XVI: Narada invokes the spirit of the dead child. The child points out that the *Atman* knows neither happiness nor misery. Narada initiates the King in a *mantra*, which brings him the rulership of the Vidyadharas. His vision of Ananta.
- CH. XVII: Chitraketu talks slightly of Siva on seeing him embracing Parvati in the presence of the sages. Cursed by Parvati. He is reborn as Vrttra.
- CH. XVIII: Diti practises the Pumsavana rite as advised by her husband Kasyapa in order to get a son who would slay Indra. Indra serves her during her austerities. She once fails in her vows, and Indra, entering her womb cuts the foetus into 49 pieces, all of which remain alive by the grace of Vishnu. He propitiates Diti by taking them all, who had become gods, into his service.
- CH. XIX: The Pumsavana rite described in detail.

BOOK VII

- CH. I: Suka says that it is not due to partiality that the Lord seems to side with the gods against the Asuras. The different *gunas* of Maya are dominant at different times. But Asuras too attain the Lord by whole-hearted absorption in Him in love or in hate.
- CH. II: Narada illustrates this by telling the story of Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. On the death of Hiranyaksha, his brother consoles the family by pointing out how every creature reaps the fruit of his own past karma. He tells the tale of Yama coming as a child and rebuking the relations of the dead King of the Usinaras for their folly in mourning for the body and pointing out that the *Atman* is immortal.

- CH. III: Hiranyakasipu's *tapas*. Brahma appears to him. He extols him in terms that identify him with the Supreme Lord.
- CH. IV: Brahma grants him boons, which allow him to tyrannise over all the worlds. The gods pray to Vishnu to save them. He promises to destroy the demon when he begins oppressing his own son Prahlada. The latter's saintly virtues and devotion praised.
- CH. V: Prahlada, taught the usual subjects by Sukracharya's sons, rejects such learning based on the sense of difference. He shocks his father by saying that the supreme good is to take refuge in Hari. Repeated attempts by his tutors fail to shake him. Hiranyakasipu, incensed, seeks to kill him, but all his attempts fail.
- CH. VI: In the tutor's absence Prahlada succeeds in instilling his views in the other Asura children, his school-fellows.
- CH. VII: He tells them that it was Narada's teaching to his mother, which he heard while he was still in her womb, that confirmed him in his devotion to Vishnu. He teaches them that one must burn up the seeds of *karma* by Bhakti-yoga and thus attain true knowledge of the Self.
- CH. VIII: Hiranyakasipu challenges Prahlada to prove the existence of Hari everywhere, and kicks at a pillar saying, 'If he is there, let him come and save you'. From the split pillar emerges the Lord in the form of man-lion and slays the Asura. Brahma and the other gods extol Him.
- CH. IX: Prahlada hymns His glory and prays that His fury may abate. The Lord, pleased, asks him to name a boon.
- CH. X: He asks only for unshaken devotion to Him and freedom from all attachments. The Lord blesses him and says he shall be the exemplar of true *bhakti* for all time. Narada ends his tale by recalling another exploit of the Lord, His foiling Maya's attempt to revive the Asuras who were slain by the Lord Siva when engaged in destroying Tripura.
- CH. XI: Yudhishtira questions Narada on the Varnasrama Dharma. The sage discourses on the Dharmas applicable to all men. The characteristics that distinguish the different *varnas* and their means of living.
- CH. XII: The duties of the student and the hermit.
- CH. XIII: The duties of the Sannyasin. Prahlada's conversation with the sage who was living like the python, a life of total inaction and vigorous mental activity. The latter explains how his conduct was influenced by what he saw in the world of Nature.
- CH. XIV: The duties of the householder. Days and places suitable for performing *karmas*.
- CH. XV: How the *sraddha* rites should be performed. The wrong kinds of *karma*. How to control the mind. The way of withdrawal. Narada recalls his own dissolute life in his birth as a Gandharva, and how he was saved by his devotion.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Puranic tradition referred to in the work itself, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is one of the Maha-Puranas. Regarded chronologically as the last, it comes fifth in the list. Its authorship, like that of all the other Puranas, is attributed to Krishna Dvaipayana (Vyasa) who was a contemporary of Sri Krishna. All these claims have been disputed by modern scholarship, which has favoured dates ranging from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries for the work! But such positive evidence as is available indicates that the upper limit cannot be later than the 10th century. Abhinava Gupta¹ in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* (XIV-8), quotes four verses from two different contexts in the *Bh. P.* (which he mentions by name) to bring out the meaning of *pramaada*. He also alludes elsewhere to the liberation of Gajendra, which is one of the high lights of this Purana. Alberuni² (early 11th century) records the fact that a list of the Puranas was read out to him from the *Vishnu Purana*, and in it the *Bhagavatam* was mentioned in the significant context of Vaasudeva; making it clear that it was not the *Devi Bhagavatam* that was meant.

On this question of date, it seems to me that sufficient attention has not been paid to what might be called negative evidence. Radha (or Radhika) is not mentioned at all in the *Bhagavatam* or the *Vishnu Puranam* or the *Harivamsa*, the basic sources of the Krishna legend. A certain unnamed Gopi is mentioned in *Bh. P. X. 30* as having been favoured by Krishna, when He led her away unknown to the other Gopis, in order to humble their pride, though later He deserted her also for the same reason. This is generally regarded as the tiny seed from which the gigantic banyan of the Krishna-Radha romance of later times grew.

But, curiously enough, reference to Radha is found in works which are much earlier in date than what scholars favour for the *Bhagavatam*. Thus the sixth-century *Gatha-Saptasati*³ (I-89) says 'You, Krishna, while blowing the dust off the face of Radhika, dost

also drive the bloom (or brightness) (*lit.* 'gaurava' or sense of self-importance) off the faces of the other Gopis'. That is a conceit, incidentally, which is strongly reminiscent of that in *Bh. P. X*; 90 (10) where His queens, playing in the water with Krishna, are described as embracing Him under the pretence of trying to snatch the squirt from His hand.

Bhatta Narayana ⁴ (eighth century), in a verse in the *Veni Samhara*, invokes the blessings of Krishna 'who seeks to appease Radha when she quits the Raasa dance in a pet'. Anandavardhana ⁵ (9th century) in his *Dhvanyaloka* (II-5) quotes a verse in which Krishna, now in Dvaraka, remarks to a Gopa, 'I suppose that the bowers on the banks of the Yamuna, that saw the amours of the Gopis and the secret joys of Radha, have become old and disused and the tender shoots of the creepers, which formed the bed of love, have all faded'. How vividly this seems to anticipate the *Gita-Govinda* (11th century)! 'Love-bowers' on the banks of rivers are mentioned in the old Tamil poetry of the Sangam age. The Raasa dance itself is at least as old as Bharata ⁶. It was known in the extreme south of the country as well as in Gujarat. But whereas in Bengal Vaishnavism the love of the *parakiyaa* (another man's wife) was exalted, neither in North India, as represented by the poems of Surdas, nor among the followers of Sri Vallabhacharya in the West, not again in the *bhajana* tradition of the South (notwithstanding its obvious indebtedness to the Chaitanya ⁷ movement) is the *parakiyaa* type of devotion looked upon with favour. Radha is represented as the supreme example of married love, and it is the *viraha-avasthaa* of the *svakiyaa*, drawing its inspiration from such late works as the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purana*, that provides the emotional content. Therefore, unless the Radha legend is to be regarded as deriving from an ultimate source which differed radically from the *Bhagavatam* in the exaltation above all others of a favoured Gopi, who was not married to Krishna, and which was unknown to the author of the *Bh. P.*, or was repugnant to him (as it may well have been, if one may judge from X 30.35 and 42),

it must be accepted that the *Bhagavatam* is older in date than the *Gathasaptasati*, which so far as our present knowledge goes, is the first work to mention Radha.

The theory that the *Bhagavatam* refers to the Alvars and that it is the work of a Southerner remains unproven. As to the question, which of the two *Bhagavatas* has the better claim to the title of *Maha-Purana*, the fact that the *Devi Bhagavatam* mentions Radha as the mother of the Ganga, the father being Krishna, (IX 18) must be satisfactorily explained if that *Purana* is to be regarded as having the better claim. Much has been sought to be made of the fact that Sridhara Swami mentions this claim, apparently because it was being put forward in his time, only to refute it by quoting the *Matsya*, and 'another Purana', as well as the *Padma*, which devotes ten chapters to the glorification of the *Bhagavatam*. The assertion in the *Bhagavatam* that a Mahapurana must have ten characteristics is sought to be refuted by the well-known definition in the *Vishnu Purana* that a *Purana* has five 'lakshanas'. Since all the five primary characteristics are found in the *Bh.P.*, the fact that it posits five more cannot be held against it. The *Vishnu Purana* definition of the 'five lakshanas' is given in III-6-25: 'The creation of the world and its successive reproductions, the genealogies (of the patriarchs and kings), the periods of the Manus, and the transactions of the (royal) dynasties, are narrated in all these Puranas'. And verse 27 adds, 'In every part of it, in its narratives of primary and subsidiary creation, of families and of periods, the mighty Vishnu is declared in this Purana' (H. H. Wilson's translation). The *Bhagavatam* does not depart from this purpose, but only makes it more explicit. While the five topics, superficially considered, might seem to look upon an objective history of the creation and sustenance of the world as the only legitimate purpose of a *Purana*, the insistence upon Vishnu 'being declared' in every part of it, justifies the *Bhagavata's* emphasising the inner significance of these narrations by claiming to deal also with the metaphysical truths underlying

the Lord's work of creation, preservation and destruction. Of the ten *lakshanas* described by the *Bhagavata*, *Aasraya*, dealt with at length in the *Tenth Book*, is the exposition of the Brahma or Paramatman, 'the Base and Support of all that is, Himself self-sustained'. He is the First and (as the *jiva* the) Final Cause to which all the other nine point. The purpose of the world process is thus expressed in the Vedas' Hymn: 'The Supreme Lord created the intellect, the organs of perception and action, the mind and the vital airs to provide the *jiva* with a world of experience, to perform works, to satisfy their desires in the several worlds and to win release'. The *Bhagavatam* speaks of the Brahma, Who is also Paramatman and Bhagavan, as identical with Sri Krishna; and so there is no anachronism in its treating Him as the referent even in contexts relating to what happened in ages long anterior to His advent on earth. He is, as it emphatically declares, not an incarnation at all but 'Bhagavan Himself'. Though playing His play in time and space, He is outside time and space.

The most rewarding approach to the *Bhagavata* is to regard it as a poem—a great philosophical poem—among the Puranas, as the Ramayana claims to be a poem—and the first of poems—while not ceasing to be an Itihasa. In fact Vopadeva in his *Harileelamrta* (I. 9) claims for it the distinction of being at once a Prabhu Samhita, a Suhrt Samhita and a Kaantaa Samhita. It contains all the conventional features of an epic—descriptions of Nature and the seasons, of wars and dynasties, and so on. But its supreme achievement is that it has given us the Divine Personality of Krishna 'Who is the Home of all who seek Him, the Supreme Bliss that sports eternally in the ocean of the Yadu race', as Sridhara finely says. The individual stamp of the poet is seen in the creative use he makes of his sources. As a Purana the *Bhagavata* takes the bulk of its material (we must presume) from the original Purana corpus, from which all the extant works called Puranas mainly derive their contents. Naturally much of the matter is common to all of them. They also

borrow from each other in respect of special features. Thus the author of the *Bhagavata* may be said to have kept the *Vishnu Purana* constantly before his mind; many thoughts, and even expressions occasionally, are borrowed from the older work. But this must be understood subject to the reservation that the *Vishnu P.* as it stands to-day embodies much material that is later than the *Bhagavata*; instances⁸ are the treatment of the life and doings of Bharata, the sage, and the description of cosmography. But as a general rule the *V. P.* is more realistic, down to earth, less artistic and poetic, though (it must be said) also less wordy. The narration is more straightforward, though occasionally it is elliptical. Thus the *V. P.* does not say what the relationship between Vasudeva and Nanda was, or how exactly Krishna and Yoga Maya were exchanged. Such details as that Bala fought with Yama to recover Sandipani's child or that Mayavati masqueraded as Sambara's wife rather strain the imagination of the reader. The Parijata episode almost degenerates into a village wives' quarrel between Sachi and Satyabhama; but the *Bh. P.* goes to the other extreme, for it contents itself with the bald statement that Indra and his celestials fought with Krishna, and denounces his pride; which leaves the reader rather mystified. Likewise 'the overturning-of-the-cart' episode leaves the reader guessing, since no overt demoniac influence is mentioned. Its account of Akrura's sublime devotion is not easily reconciled with the devious part he plays in regard to the Syamantaka; unless we are to regard the former as a record of a transient, if intensely vivid, mystical experience.

The omissions in the *Vishnu Purana* are more significant. The deliverance of Nalakubara from Narada's curse, the killing of the Asura who came as a whirlwind, the slaying of Aghasura, the stealing of the Gopa maids' clothes, the gracious unbending to the wives of the sacrificers, and such charming pictures as those of the Lord's domestic life, and the bestowal of His grace on Kuchela and Srutadeva, result in the emergence of an emotionally less appealing, if not

spiritually less significant Krishna.

In what may be regarded as the *Bhagavata's* special contribution to the Purana corpus, it is even more satisfying. Its story of the other major incarnations of Vishnu is characterized by the same vividness of detail and abounding sympathy for the human condition as are its accounts of Rama and Krishna. The *Bhagavata* is unique in showing Yajna-varaha as fighting Hiranyaksha. Though there are stray references to Kapila in other Puranas, it is here (in the Third Book) that an elaborate account of his birth as the son of Kardama and Devahuti is given, as well as an exposition of the Sankhya philosophy that he gave to the world. Even Narasimha, for all his awe-inspiring grandeur, endears Himself to the reader by the testy advice to Brahmaa not to go on creating trouble by giving boons to all and sundry. No less sympathetic and impressive are the many scenes in which the Lord Siva plays a notable part. As a Purana devoted to the exaltation of Vishnu, it naturally shows Siva as extolling Vishnu and acknowledging His supremacy. And the episodes describing Siva's temporary succumbing to the charms of Mohini, His tribulations resulting from a heedless generosity to Vrka, and one or two other similar incidents look artificially contrived in their context. But in His dealings with Sati and His readiness to swallow the Halahala poison, He reveals a tenderness for frail humanity, and in pardoning the erring gods a magnanimity to which it would be difficult to find parallels elsewhere. And in all trying situations—in the Mohini episode, in the fight against Krishna on Sambara's side, and in the encounter with the rather self-righteous Chitraketu—He conducts Himself with a simple dignity that makes Vishnu's frequent and unreserved praise of Him and affirmation of the unity of the Trinity seem no empty compliment.

And what an extraordinary gallery of devotees and heroes on the spiritual path we find exhibited in colours so subtly mixed that they steal over the heart and exercise a haunting charm! Ajamila, the sinner redeemed by the Lord's name, the child devotees

Dhruva and Prahlada, the Asuras Bali and Vrttra, the poor Brahmana Kuchela, whom the Lord was proud to claim as His comrade, the starving Rantideva who prayed for no other boon but to remain in the heart of the afflicted and allay their sufferings—we may go on endlessly adding to the number. The supreme art that makes righteousness readable scatters its largesse with a lavish hand in these illuminated pages.

The poet of the *Bhagavatam* was steeped in the Ramayana. There is conscious imitation in many episodes—such as Pradyumna's fight with Dyuman, Salva's slaying of a Maya Vasudeva—not to speak of the magnificent retelling of the tale of Rama and Sita. His metrical variety and virtuosity also remind us of Valmiki's longer verses. But he is not afraid to depart from Valmiki. He cannot bring himself to mention Sita's fire-ordeal, or to admit that the Kapila who gave the world the Sankhya Sastra could succumb to anger so far as to lay a curse on the sons of Sagara. He knew his Kalidasa too, and to him doubtless is the graceful reference in the last verse of the *Raasa Panchadhyayi*, though couched in the plural. He lavishes all his verbal resources in describing the beauty of the sylvan glades in which the child Gopala found delight, and in the scores of descriptions of the Divine beauty clad in human guise or in the habiliments of heaven. If in these latter there is a certain monotony, it must be remembered that the object of the poet was not so much to describe something new as to provide a support for meditation. That may be said, too, of the numberless hymns that are broadcast in the Purana and form so notable a feature of it; some of the most appealing of these have an almost incantational power.

That brings us to the question of the *Bhagavata's* vocabulary. It is probably more copious and rich than that of any other writer in the language. And very often the words are used in a sense slightly different from that recognised in ordinary usage—as will be seen from the enormous material a lexicon-maker like Monier-Williams draws from it. The style is difficult, sometimes crabbed; it often tends to a

Byzantine exuberance. But at its best, as in the Kuchela episode, it is lean and taut as a lute-string, swift and clear like a mountain stream; while for sheer dramatic power as well as for sustained grandeur there are few parallels to the story of Bharata.

The *Bhagavata* draws heavily on the Vedic language. And it freely indulges in un-Paninean usages. Vopadeva, the thirteenth-century grammarian (to whom the authorship of the *Bhagavata* was once attributed!) has (we are told) established in his unpublished work, the *Paramahamsapriya*, that the *Bh.P.* contains more than a thousand forms not sanctioned by the grammarians. Un-Paninean usage⁹, it has been suggested, is the result of either metrical exigencies or of the infusion of Prakrt. The employment of Vedic language may be accounted for by personal idiosyncrasy, due to long and loving acquaintance with ancient literature, or it may even reveal an engaging touch of pedantry. But Prof. J. A. B. van Buitenen¹⁰ brings against the poet of the *Bhagavatam* the portentous charge of 'Sanskritization' with a view to suggesting rather than affirming that the new faith goes back to the Vedas. Sanskritization is the new term imported by him from anthropology into linguistics. To quote the Professor,

The Krishna legend has to *sound* Vedic because it *was* Vedic. There is a similar reaching back to the most ancient sources—however imperfectly known—to make the old foundation support the new edifice. Here Sanskritization once more takes a linguistic form. Writing in Sanskrit was not enough; to the faithful the supremacy of Krishnaism was hardly in doubt, but the high-sounding language (which often must have been unintelligible) gave appropriate notice of its Vedic orthodoxy

It may be pointed out that the *Bhagavata* was not the only Purana to be intensely preoccupied with the Veda. If it engages in a re-interpretation of the *Isavasya Upanishad* and the *Purusha Sukta*, the *Vayu Purana* (generally regarded as one of the oldest Puranas) is no less profuse in quoting from and using the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* and the *Sata-rudriya*. Conscious and motivated archaizing of the language was hardly consistent with the Purana's frequent discussion of

the topics of the Darsanas, which no contemporary reader would have regarded as coeval with the Vedas in time.

The *Bhagavata* seems to be rambling and repetitive, going back and forth like the weaver's shuttle, and the sequence, or even the relevance of an event in the particular context, is not always obvious. This is due to some extent to the fact that there is a multiplicity of narrators. The transmission of the *Bhagavata's* teaching is through two channels. The first started with the four-verse *Bhagavatam* (II. 9 : 32.35) imparted by the Lord to Brahma to energize and prepare him for the task of creation. Brahma taught this teaching to Narada, who communicated it to Vyasa (see I. 4-6 *passim*). And Vyasa, elaborating it into this Purana, taught it to his son Suka, who coming by chance to the Ganga bank where King Parikshit had begun his fast unto death, expounded it to him to strengthen him in his *vairagya* and *bhakti*, as the Suta (who had learnt it from Suka) tells the sages in Naimisa, in reciting the Purana for their benefit. And he included in it the teaching that had descended through a different *Guru-parampara*. Sankarshana had imparted the Gospel of Love to Sanatkumara, who taught it to Sankhyayana and who in his turn imparted it to Parasara who taught it to Maitreya. The former propagated it through the *Vishnu Purana*. And the latter imparted it in substance to Vidura, as Sri Krishna had desired him to do when He departed this world, after having taught the supreme wisdom to him and Uddhava. The *Bhagavata* of Vyasa, as expounded by Suka, embodies this teaching in *Books Three* and *Four* (dealing with the Primary and the Secondary creation); while in *Book Eleven* it records Krishna's direct teaching. The two accounts of Kapila's Sankhya, the one given by Maitreya and the other taught by Krishna, may be cited as an example of the repetition of topics (though not of their scope and content) that results.

The schematic treatment, by which *Books Three* to *Twelve* are made to cover the 'ten topics', ranging from 'Sarga' to 'Asraya' does not altogether eliminate

the intrusion of other topics. And indeed, when the *Bhagavata* describes itself as a *samhita* (which means a collection), one must be prepared for a certain looseness of construction. And when, as in *Books One, Ten and Eleven*, Krishna's life and doings at Mathura and Dvaraka are exhibited in the context of His activities as Prime Mover in the *Mahabharata* drama, the chronological sequence is neglected in favour of the poetically effective arrangement. And indeed the reader ceases to be worried by the fact that he gets, not a straightforward narrative, but a series of illuminated panels lit up by the cosmic consciousness of Suka. For, as I said in a paper published about thirty years ago, 'While the *Bhagavata* is traditionally attributed to Vyasa, it is in a special sense the creation of Suka. The dramatic scene in which the sage makes his entry in the first *Skandha* sets the key to the whole story. The Lord has withdrawn from the earthly scene to live with us for ever in his *bhaagavati tanu*. It is this enchanting picture of the eternal Krishna that the great artist builds up stroke by stroke against the sulphurous, storm-tossed background of a world in dissolution. On this glorious figure he lavishes all the delicacy of his spiritual perception, all his wealth of poetic imagination. He plunges ever and anon into the depths of the Self and returns bringing with him handfuls of pearl'.¹¹

Suka was a *jnani* who delighted solely in the Self. And yet he learnt the *Bhagavata con amore*. He says that he did it 'because his heart was ravished by the pastimes of the illustrious Lord, 'though I was established in the contemplation of the unconditioned Brahma'. 'For such is the nature of Hari', explains a famous verse, 'that even the contemplatives who delight in the Self and are free from the knots of the heart, offer their wholehearted devotion to Hari untainted by selfishness'. It is this Hari, the Dispeller of sins, the Stealer of hearts and the Bringer of light that is delineated as Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Bhagavata*; for the two are essentially one. In fact the latter may be (and has been) appropriately described as an extended commentary on the former. It

is as difficult to find a narrowly consistent philosophy in the one as in the other. Nevertheless, both are securely grounded in metaphysic. In Ch. XXVIII of *Book Eleven*, occur these uncompromising statements of the Lord: 'All duality is unreal'; 'there is nothing that can be shown to exist, which is other than the Atman'. And He goes on, 'The manifold wrought by nescience out of *guna* and *Karma*, which has been regarded before the dawn of knowledge as not different from the Atman, because it was an illusory appearance in It, is negated by knowledge, My friend. The Atman itself was neither changed nor restored to a pre-existing state. Sunrise only removes the darkness that veils men's eyes, it does not produce the objects that become visible; even thus the knowledge that reveals Me, the Atman, serves but to dispel the darkness of nescience that clouds the *Jiva's* understanding. This Atman is self-luminous. It knows no birth. It is unfathomable in Its wisdom and immeasurably vast. It comprehends all experience. It is the One without a second, from which speech retires baffled'. The essential identity of the *jiva* with the Brahma, the irrelevance of *karma* for the man who has attained enlightenment, and the truth of '*jivan-mukti*' are repeatedly affirmed. So much so, Prof S. N. Das-Gupta observes, with reference to Ch. XIII of *Book Eleven*,¹² 'It may generally appear rather strange to find such an extreme idealistic monism in the *Bhagavata*, but there are numerous passages which show that an extreme form of idealism recurs now and then as one of the principal lines of thought in the *Bhagavata*'.

But there are also to be found many passages of a different tenor. That the world does not exist apart from the Atman may (it is contended) be said without implying its unreality. The *jiva* is described in one place as atomic (see XI. 16. 12, p. 580, Vol. II and foot-note). The use of such different descriptions for the One Reality as Brahma, Paramatma and Bhagavan, has led to the suggestion that there are different grades to be discovered in It. When the Lord shows Himself to Brahmaa in Vaikuntha after the latter's prolonged *tapas*, the Creator says (p. 158, Vol. I),

'What I now see is not in any way different from Thy essential self, O Supreme Lord, Whose glory is unobscured, Whose unity is unflawed, Whose heart is pure Bliss'. And he affirms that it is 'without a doubt what Thou didst reveal to us, Thy devotees, in the act of deep meditation'. Maya is spoken of as a 'Power' of the Lord. It is said that the man who sticks to his *svadharma* 'will attain in this very life the knowledge that liberates, and if he is fortunate, will become devoted to Me' (Vol II. p. 599). As unmistakably as in the *Gita* the *bhakta* is told, 'Give up all Dharma and put yourself into my hands'. Describing the process of involution in Pralaya, the Lord says, 'Prakṛti becomes one with time, time merges in the Mahapurusha, who sets Maya at work, and He in Me, the Atman That knows no birth. The Atman, Which is free from all limiting adjuncts and is the ground of creation and destruction, is established in Itself' (p. 620). And just before the Raasa festival begins, the Lord is said to have shown the Gopas not only His essential Self, the Brahma, but also His Abode Vaikuntha (X. 28, Vol. II, p. 265).

How the Nirguna could also be the Saguna or the Formless could exhibit numberless forms that could be the object of adoration, are problems for which philosophy has not provided satisfactory solutions. But for the God-intoxicated mystic they offer no problem at all. What baffles mind and speech may yet yield to the gentle warmth of the heart, in which the Lord (says a famous passage) is held confined by the silken cords of love that bind His feet. The Absolute is bliss as well as Knowledge and Truth. *Raso vai Sah*, says Sruti. And because all powers and possibilities are in It, It can display as occasion arises any form It chooses. The Lord has been described as having two arms, four arms, eight arms. This fluidity exactly fits the *Apaani-paada* of *Sruti*: 'He, who, without hands and feet, is swifter than the swiftest'. 'He Who is without Name or Form, assumes just such forms as His *bhaktas*, each according to his preference, would like to cherish'. Vopadeva in his *Muktaphala* has a *sutra*, which according to his com-

mentator, find support in *Bh. P.* III.9.11. 'Numberless are His incarnations', as god, man or brute.

But Krishna is most emphatically not a god cast in the image of man. Failure to understand this elementary fact has caused vast misunderstanding of what is undoubtedly the heart of the *Bhagavata*, the *Raasa-panchadhyayi*. That poets and painters have allowed their imagination free play in dealing with this theme is not surprising. But that sober critics could assume that the poet intended to produce a romance of clandestine, carnal love is something that must shock any one who gives close attention to the text. The *baalalilas* are so artfully contrived that every new and engaging childish prank or pastime is followed by another miraculous exploit. And being thus trained to accept and accommodate side by side the charm of the human and the truth of the superhuman, the mind of the reader surrenders itself completely and unquestioningly to the denouement, the magic of the *Raasa dance*, where the bees were the singers, as if it were the stately revolutions of the stars moving to the music of the spheres. There is a curious, dreamlike quality about the happenings in 'those autumn nights' which set them apart from sublunary reality. The full moon itself would seem to have come forth to do the Lord's pleasure, as Sridhara's brilliant fancy suggests (see com. on XXIX. 2). In the Rasa circle there were to be found as many Krishnas as there were Gopis, though He produced the illusion in the mind of each that He was alone with her. Indeed in all these revels He was never alone with any single Gopi; except on that one occasion when He seemed to prefer one of them, disappearing from the sight of others. But that (as I have already said) was to destroy their self-complacency. Suka says that in all those nights the Gopis' husbands never found them missing. And the reader might as justifiably be mystified, as Brahmaa was on an earlier occasion (X. 13) when he was led to wonder who were the real Gopa children, those whom he had secreted and put in a trance, or those who had taken their place and were the very spit and image of them. That wonderful episode (the authen-

ticity of which has been questioned by some commentators for reasons which are hardly sufficient) was not only an indication of the infinite puissance of the Lord but also of the multi-dimensional richness of His *leela*. Even His 16,000 wedded spouses did not know the Lord's mind, says Suka. Seeing that He appeared and seemed to be present all the time in the house of each one of them, it is permissible to doubt whether they really knew even His person! Sridhara-swami points out the sign-posts that Suka sets up for the unwary, who might else miss the way. Suka says that the Lord 'contained His virility within Himself', that He 'delighted only in the Self', and that the Raasa revels were merely 'such entertainment as a child finds in looking at his own image in the looking-glass'. 'Projecting His own unique properties and attributes, such as beauty, fragrance and sweetness, on them and endowing them with His mastery of all the arts, He played with these': that is Sridhara's perceptive interpretation.

The text repeatedly stresses that there was no physical union. The Lord Himself tells the young maids of Vraja, the wives of the sacrificers and the Gopis who played with Him, that those who loved Him could not hope for such union with Him. If Suka said of the Gopis that they looked upon Krishna as a human lover, and Uddhava, that they were tainted by unchastity, it must be remembered that they were judging from the strictest Indian standards which hold that even a fleeting and momentary admiration for a stranger is sin, and the penalty must be paid, as Renukaa the mother of Parasurama, found to her cost. Unlike the Gopis who joined in the Rasa revels, that Gopi and that Brahmana dame who had been prevented from going to see Krishna, were instantly released from *samsara* and attained Him. Mr. W. G. Archer, who claims that in Chapters IV and V of his *Loves of Krishna*¹³ he has strictly followed the *Bhagavatam*, says that when the Brahmana dames complained that one of them, whose people had prevented her coming with them, had given up her life, 'Krishna smiles, reveals the woman and says, "Who

ever loves God never dies. She was here before you'' (p. 39). And, when the Gopis went in search of Krishna, they came upon 'a bed of leaves' and 'on the leaves they find a looking-glass' (p. 42). Very interesting details; but they are not to be found in the *Bhagavatam*. The Gopis themselves confess that they had fallen from the way of life approved in the Vedas and forfeited the respect of the world. But they are sustained by the conviction that Krishna is 'the Inner Ruler and Witness in all that lives'. And that is the truth with which Suka conclusively satisfies Parikshit's doubts about the violation of Dharma. And though Mr. Archer thinks that for Indians of the middle ages the savour had gone out of the Krishna story with His numerous marriages and they found vicarious satisfaction of their repressed urges in the uninhibited ardours of the *Gita Govinda*, for instance, the Gopis themselves recognised the superiority of the queens' unself-regarding and total devotion to Krishna. The dominant Indian tradition, as represented by Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa, exalts married love.

In describing the mystical union, European mystics freely use the imagery of physical passion. Thus St. John of the Cross sings:

' Within my flowering breast
Which only for himself entirely I save
He sunk into his rest
And all my gifts I gave
Lulled by the airs which the cedars wave.

* * *

With his serenest hand
My neck he wounded, and
Suspended every sense with his caresses (Roy Campbell's
translation of *Songs of Rature* in the *Penguin Classics*.)

And the Upanishads have no hesitation in employing such imagery. If the *Bhagavata*, more daring, invests the Divine lover with a form, that form is so ethereal, so generalised and free from human limitations, that it is not easily distinguished from the image of the God of his worship that the yogi sees within his heart in deep meditation. Such God-realization comes as the consummation of the process of Self-naughting. And the emptying out of the ego, so that the Atman

may shine in all Its dazzling splendour, is the purpose of the spiritual discipline that Krishna imposes on all those on whom He sheds His grace. For this discovery of the *Atman* is the supreme impersonal joy that the Upanishad promises. In commenting on the calculus of 'Ananda' that the *Taittiriya* (II-8) provides, Sri Sankara points out that even worldly bliss is a particle of the bliss that is the Brahma. But it gets covered up by ignorance and desire, men looking for satisfaction in objects outside themselves and not in their own soul. The man who has imbibed the teaching of the Veda and is free from desire is therefore regarded as being capable of a joy a hundred times as great as that of the highest human bliss. But there are degrees of desirelessness; the greater the freedom from desire, the higher does the *srotriya akaamahata*, rise in the scale, till he can equal the bliss of Hiranyagarbha, in whom there is only a vestige of the ego that wills and desires. When that too disappears, the subject-object relationship ceases, and it is the Bliss of the Self that shines. That was the goal that the Gopis attained.

The *Bhagavata* illustrates many other features of the mystic life—the faith in the redeeming power of the Lord's name, the importance of seeking the fellowship of saints, and looking upon the Guru as God, the practice of treating every living creature with equal regard as the tabernacle of God. But its unique contribution is the idea that in the pursuit of God intensity is all. 'It does not matter whether you love Him as the Gopis did or hate him as Sisupala did; do it with all your heart, and God is won', so says Suka, provocatively. This has presented difficulties to many. The *Vishnu Purana* (IV 15.7 to 9) offers an alternative explanation. But there is little danger of too many Sisupalas cropping up. In him all other impulses were snuffed out by this towering passion. He was obsessed with God to the exclusion of all minor preoccupations; unlike Vena, whose crusade against the *dharmic* life was inspired by mere self-love and self-glorification. As Narada told Vyasa (I. 5-9, Vol. I p. 16), 'If a man's mind were set on other things

he would find it difficult to settle down to a consideration of any one thing'. Sisupala was not thus hindered. And Krishna, in inflicting physical death on him, rid him at the same time of his *karmavaasanaa*, which had all snow-balled up into this single over-mastering passion, with the result that the pure Atman, which alone remained, merged in the Brahma.

However that may be, there is no denying that the *Bhagavata* holds out hopes even for the chronic sinner if only he will open his heart to the gentle influence of love and the irresistible charm of the Divine Child. And like the *Gita* it presents a programme of practical spiritual training through a harmonious combination of *jnana*, *bhakti* and *karma*, suited to the temperament and limitations of the *sadhaka*. The extreme asceticism it preaches in some places is not meant for all. It insists on the performance of enjoined duties in a disinterested spirit. While emphasising the supreme importance of *bhakti*, it echoes the Lord's declaration in the *Gita*, 'The *jnani* is Myself'. Its Sankhya is different from the classical Sankhya (since it refuses to recognise duality), but it is ready to use it for explaining the phenomenal world, much as the schools of Vedanta do, even as it advocates the technique of Yoga. It accepts the authority of the Agamas and is catholic enough to allow the worshipper free choice as to the mode of worship. It recognises and esteems the ecstatic type of devotion, but distinguishes it from frothy emotionalism. It insists that *bhakti* must be founded on the bed-rock of metaphysic; the Prahlada type of votary, when he has found Achyuta ensconced in his heart, falls silent, well content.

The active religious life of the Hindu to-day is grounded in the *bhakti* that is fostered by the study of the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata*. And these uphold the loftiest ethical ideals. The good man, as Sri Krishna pictures him (XI. 11.29 to 33), is not incredible. He may not be found in the market-place. But there are such men, who by virtue of an equable temperament and a strenuous training, have lifted themselves up above the multitude. The *Bhagavata* shows how

one may follow in their footsteps, and of those of the happy few who by their one-pointed devotion have qualified themselves for the descent of Grace.

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6. According to Sridhara. Abhinava Gupta in his commentary on the *Natya Sastra* IV. 268, cites certain verses from what he calls 'the work of old authors', which define Hallisaka and Raasaka in terms which suggest that the Raasa dance of *Bh. P.* was a mixture of the two.
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SRIMAD - BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

THE SAGES QUESTION THE SŪTA

Om : Salutations to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva !

Let us meditate on that transcendent Reality¹ from Which proceed the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, It being invariably present in all objects, as It is absent from what has no objective existence ;² Which is omniscient and self-luminous ; Which inspired in the first seer,³ by a mere prompting of the mind, the knowledge of the Veda that baffles even the great sages ; grounded in Which, the threefold creation (the product of the three *guṇas*) has the semblance of truth, like the illusory appearance of light, water and earth in each other⁴ ; and Which, by Its own Glory⁵, casts out the deluding power of Māyā. Here, in this glorious *Bhāgavatam*, the work of the Supreme Contemplative,⁶ is expounded the highest Dharma,⁷ which is wholly disinterested, and to which the compassionate souls who are totally free from envy give their allegiance. Herein may be easily found that knowledge of the highest Reality which brings one all felicity and uproots the three kinds of misery. What other scripture is there which secures, as this does, the instant and permanent presence of the Lord in the hearts of those whose accumulated merit induces in them the desire to hear it recited ? Come, all of you who have taste and true feeling, and drink, even if you have attained the blessed state of release, of the compacted sweetness that is the *Bhāgavatam*, the fruit of the wishing-tree,

¹ Parameśvara (the Supreme Lord) (S.) See Notes. ² Such chimeras as 'sky flower' or 'barren woman's son', as distinguished from the empirical world of everyday reality. ³ Brahmā, the Creator. ⁴ As in the mirage, where light looks like water. The text would literally mean 'mutual exchange of light, water and earth'. ⁵ The omniscience of the spirit, against which Māyā is powerless. ⁶ The Lord Narayana. ⁷ The loving worship of God.

the Veda, which has slipped down from the mouth of Suka¹ and is pure nectar of immortality ! (1-3).

At Naimiṣa, sacred to Vishnu, the sages, Śaunaka and others, were engaged in the sacrificial session known as 'Sattrā', which takes a thousand years to complete, with the object of attaining Him Whose glories are sung in heaven and Who is the Home of His devotees. One day the sages, having done all the fire-rites enjoined for the morning, respectfully questioned the Sūta (chronicler), who, having been duly welcomed, was seated there. The sages said : ' You have learnt and expounded the Purāṇas, O sinless one, as well as the epics, and all the Dharma-Sāstras there are. You know exactly, good sir, all that the blessed sage Bādarāyaṇa, foremost of the men of learning knew, and all that other sages, who had knowledge of the Saṁguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahma knew too, because you were the recipient of their grace. Teachers will reveal to their loving pupils even the deepest mysteries. Tell us—and may you be blest with long life !—what you have concluded, from a straightforward interpretation of those works, is the unfailing means to the supreme good. In this Kali age, O well-bred one, men are mostly short-lived, indolent and dull-witted ; they are dogged by misfortune and plagued by bodily and other ills. Many are the *Sāstras* that must be heard and considered on each topic, and many and various the *karmas* they prescribe. Therefore tell us, who are believers, good sir, what in your judgement is the essence of their teaching, which would help the mind to achieve tranquillity (4-11).

' You know, O Sūta, to whom we wish all that is good, what the purpose was of the exalted Lord, the Protector of His devotees, in being born to Vasudeva of Devaki. You should tell us about that, my dear, we are all eager to hear. For His descent into this world is always for the protection of all creatures and for their prosperity. Who that is eager to cleanse his heart will not listen to the tale of the glories, which wash off the stains of Kali, of the exalted Lord Whose exploits are extolled by men of holy fame ; by uttering Whose name even involun-

¹ Here is a pun. 'Śuka' means 'parrot' ; it is also the name of the saint, the son of Vyāsa, who gave out the Bhāgavatam.

tarily the man who is in the horrid grip of the transmigratory life is instantly freed, since Fear¹ itself is terrified of that name ; having gained the shelter of Whose feet, O Sūta, the sages abide in tranquillity and purify all who come into their presence, whereas the waters of the heavenly stream (the Gangā) purify only those who constantly resort to them ? Tell us, who are all attention, of the mighty deeds, repeatedly sung by the sages, of Him Who in sport takes various forms² (12-17).

‘Tell us, too, O sagacious one, the uplifting story of the Supreme Lord Hari’s various descents on earth, playing His play of His own free will, employing His power of Māyā. We for our part can never have enough of the tale of the illustrious Lord’s exploits, which gains in sweetness every moment for those who can relish its savour. And, as you know, the exalted Lord Keśava (Vishnu-Krishna) did miraculous deeds of prowess, beyond the power of mere mortals, along with Rama (Balarāma), His true glory hidden behind the delusive human exterior. Knowing that the Kali Age is here, we are assembled in this spot sacred to Vishnu for the Sattrā sacrifice, which leaves us plenty of time for the tales of Hari. To us who wish to escape from the transmigratory existence³ which is so formidable, draining away as it does the sap of goodness that there is in men, the Creator Himself has shown you like a helmsman to those who would cross the ocean. Tell us, too, in whom Dharma finds a protector, now that the Lord of Yoga, Krishna, Who was devoted to the Brahmanas, and was the shield and armour of Dharma, again abides in His own essence’ (18-23).

CHAPTER II

DEVOTION TO THE LORD THE SUPREME END OF LIFE

The son⁴ of Romaharshana was delighted to hear those well-considered questions of the Brahmanas. Praising what they said, he began his exposition. The

¹ Death. ² Such as the (Hindu) Trinity, Brahmā, Vishnu and Rudra. ³ ‘Kali’ in the text. ⁴ Named Ugrasravas.

Sūta said : I make my humble obeisance to the sage¹ who could enter into the minds of all beings ; who did not engage in works² but, having renounced the worldly life, was going forth as a lone wanderer on the face of the earth, when Dvaipāyana, fearful of losing him, called after him yearningly, 'O my son !', and the trees, filled with his presence, answered. I beseech the grace of him, the son of Vyāsa, the teacher of contemplatives, who, out of compassion for those entangled in the worldly life and longing to escape, taught this Purāṇa, which should be guarded as a solemn mystery, and is matchless in its greatness, which contains the quintessence of the Vedas and is unique and incomparable, which is the lamp that lights up the *Ātman* housed in the body. With humble prostrations to Narayana and to Nara, the best of men, as well as to the goddess Sarasvati and to Vyāsa, one should begin the exposition of this work, which is known as 'Jaya' (1-4).

Excellent are the questions you have put me, O sages ; for they are calculated to promote the welfare of the world of men, since they are about Krishna and will make for tranquillity of mind. That is the highest Dharma³ from which springs the disinterested devotion to Adhokshaja (Vishnu) that admits no impediment, and brings the mind peace ineffable. The loving devotion that is directed to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva very quickly culminates in distaste for the worldly life, and brings that knowledge which is beyond the reach of the discursive reason. That Dharma, however scrupulously practised, which does not induce the desire to hear the story of the exalted Lord Vishvaksena (Vishnu) is so much labour lost. No material gains can accrue from the Dharma which paves the way to liberation. The wealth that is used solely in the cause of such Dharma is not regarded by the wise as means to the procurement of objects of satisfaction. The satisfaction of desires, to the extent needed for supporting life, will not pamper the appetites. The life thus lived should be devoted, not to the performance of *karma* for

¹ Śuka. ² (alt.) 'who had approached no *Guru* with the request to be invested with the sacred thread'. ³ The duties incumbent on those who want to withdraw from the worldly life.

gaining heaven and the like, but to the investigation of the Truth. Those who know the Truth declare it to be none other than that Reality which is the Non-dual Consciousness and Which is also spoken of variously as the Brahma, the Paramātman or the Bhagavān (5-11).

The sages, who have faith, see that Reality, which is the Paramātman, in their own soul by the power of devotion bred in them by listening to the exposition of the Vedantic teaching, and strengthened by knowledge and non-attachment to the worldly life. Thus, O best of Brahmanas, the supreme fruit of the faithful observance by men of their own distinctive Dharmas, according to the classification of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, is the propitiation of Hari. Therefore the praises of the exalted Lord, the Lord of the devotees, should be constantly listened to, and sung, and He should be meditated upon and adored with single-mindedness. Who will not love to hear of Him, when men of discriminating wisdom sever the *karma*¹ that fastens the knot² of the heart, with the sword of constant meditation on Him! He who goes constantly on pilgrimage to sacred places develops the desire to serve holy men. That desire in its turn instilling in him faith in the Dharma that they practise, and eagerness to hear the tales that tell of the glories of Vāsudeva, he comes, O Brahmanas, to love those tales with a great love. Krishna, the Friend of the saintly, to hear and speak Whose praises is holy, establishes Himself in the hearts of those who hear His glories sung, and dispels all evils therefrom. When their hearts have been almost completely cleansed by constant service³ to the Lord's devotees, there grows in them unshakable devotion to the illustrious Lord. Then the mind, no longer disturbed by *rajas* and *tamas*, or by lust, greed and other passions that arise from them, is established in *sattva* and attains tranquillity. The man who has thus won tranquillity of mind by devotion to the Lord, and freed himself from all attachments, comes to have direct perception of the true nature of the

¹ Here it means 'the residual impressions of past actions'. ² The egoistic attitude. ³ (*alt.*) listening to the recital of the Bhāgavatam constantly.

Lord. Only when the Supreme Lord, his own essential Self, is thus realized, the knot of the heart is cut, all doubts and misgivings are abolished, and all his *karmas* are extinguished. That is why the enlightened find especial delight in that constant devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva which purifies the mind (12-22).

Sattva, *rajas* and *tamas* are the *guṇas* of Prakṛti. Using them as means and engaging in the creation, the preservation and the destruction of the worlds, the Supreme Lord, though one and one only, bears the several names of Hari, Virinchi and Hara (Vishnu, Brahmā and Siva) in the different contexts. But, of all these, it is the *sāttvic* form¹ which He takes that confers on men all the good that they seek. From the log of wood, which is of the earth earthy, first comes smoke (which is superior to it); and from smoke, fire, which (again, is superior to it as it) makes all Vedic *karmas* possible. Likewise *rajas* is superior to *tamas*, and *sattva* to *rajas*, since it leads directly to the realization of the Brahma. Therefore in the far past the sages worshipped the exalted Lord Adhokshaja, the embodiment of pure *sattva*; and those that follow in their footsteps even now are assured of liberation from *samsāra*. Aspirants to liberation avoid the fierce lords of the elementals, but without malice to them, and devote themselves to the worship of the tranquil *amśas* of Narayana; while those who are *tāmasic* or *rājasic* by nature, being of like disposition with the overlords² of the manes, of the elementals, and of men, propitiate them, moved by the desire for prosperity, sovereign power and progeny. Vāsudeva is the supreme end of the Veda; as He is, too, the object of sacrifices, of the teaching of the Yoga-śāstras, the performance of rites, and the *Śāstras* teaching the way of knowledge; and He is enlightenment itself. The *Śāstras* that expound *dharma*s, and the goals they have in view, also point to Vāsudeva as the ultimate goal (23-29).

The exalted and omnipresent Lord Himself created the universe at the beginning by His own power of Māyā, which has the *guṇas* for its constituents and manifests itself as the world of cause and effect, while He Himself

¹ As Vishnu. ² These are Aryamā, Rudra, and Hiraṇyagarbha.

remains untouched by the *guṇas*. Having entered into the objects evolved by it (*Māyā*), which are the products of the *guṇas*, He appears as though He were attached to them, whereas He is in truth impregnable in His essential intelligence. Just as the one fire, kindled in various logs of wood, appears as many and different fires, so does the Supreme Lord, the Soul of the universe, seem to be different in different creatures. Having entered the beings created by Him, using the evolutes of the *guṇas*—the subtle elements, the senses and the mind—Hari enjoys¹ the objects appropriate to each of them. And taking delight in playfully incarnating Himself among the gods, the inferior creation, and men, the Creator of the worlds protects them all by His own goodness (30-34).

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPAL INCARNATIONS OF VISHNU

The Sūta said: At the beginning the exalted Lord took, for the purpose of creating the world, the form of the Puruṣa, with a body derived from Mahat and the rest², and having sixteen parts.³ As He lay on the waters in *yogic samādhi*, Brahmā, the overlord of the great Progenitors, appeared in the lotus that grew in His lake-like navel. That form of His was of unexcelled and immaculate *sattva*. It was on the disposition of His limbs that the whole world was erected. Those who are endowed with the all-seeing eye of the *jñāni*, see that marvellous form,⁴ with its numberless feet, thighs, arms and faces, and its thousands of heads, ears, eyes and noses, resplendent with crowns, robes and ear-pendants. This is the indestructible seed of all the incarnations and the home to which they return. It is by those (the Prajāpatis) who are descended from him (Brahmā), who is a partial incarnation of this

¹(*v. r.*) 'rules'. ²The ego and the five subtle elements. ³Organs of sense and action and gross elements. ⁴Described in *Puruṣa Sūkta* R. V. X. 90.

(Purusha), that gods, men and all other creatures, including animals, are created (1-5).

The self-same God, Who had taken the form of the Purusha, engaged in the creation of the ever-youthful *rishis*;¹ incarnate as a Brahmana, He took the difficult vow of eternal celibacy² and study of the Veda. In His second³ incarnation the Lord of the sacrifice took the form of a boar for lifting up the earth that had sunk down to the nether regions, so that the world of creatures could be brought into existence. Incarnate for a third time as a *rishi* among the gods, He as Nārada revealed the Vaishnava⁴ scripture, by a knowledge of which *karma* may be so performed that it does not involve one in bondage. In the fourth incarnation He was born of the wife of Dharma, and as the *rishis* Nara and Narayana, practised exceedingly rigorous austerities, keeping the mind under perfect control. His fifth incarnation was as Kapila, Lord of the adepts, who taught Āsuri the Sāṅkhya Sāstra, which had lapsed into oblivion by efflux of time, and which conclusively ascertains the Sāṅkhyan categories. For the sixth time He was incarnate as the son of Atri, born of Anasūyā, according to Atri's own wish; and He taught the science of the Self to Alarka, Prahlāda and others. In His seventh incarnation He was born to Ruchi of Ākūti, and was known as Yajna; with His sons, the gods known as Yāmas, and other gods, He ruled (as Indra) in the Swāyambhuva Manvantara. In His eighth incarnation the Lord of the mighty strides⁵ was born to Nābhi of Meru Devi to show the way of life (of the Paramahamsas), which men who are resolved to attain the supreme good should adopt, and which is an object of reverence to those of the other *āśramas*. Acceding to the request of the sages, He was born as a king, Prthu, in His ninth incarnation, and won out of the earth the good things that it can yield, and that is why, O Brahmanas, this incarnation of the Lord is looked upon as the fairest. In the Chākshusha Manvantara, when all the oceans overflowed and

¹ The four mind-born sons of Brahmā. ² This refers in particular to one of the four, Sanatkumāra. ³ The numbers do not indicate order of priority in time. ⁴ The Pāñcharātra Āgama. ⁵ (alt.) 'He of the mighty exploits'.

became one vast sheet of water, He appeared as the Great Fish¹ and saved Vaivasvata Manu by putting him on board a ship, which was but the earth itself. In His eleventh incarnation the Omnipresent Lord in the form of a tortoise² bore on His back the Mandara mountain when the gods and the Asuras churned the ocean. His twelfth incarnation was as Dhanvantari. In the thirteenth He appeared as a woman, Mohini, who fed the gods (on nectar), deluding the others. Taking the form of a man-lion (Narasimha) in the fourteenth incarnation, He ripped open with His claws the breast of the strong king of the Asuras, as the mat-maker splits reeds. Taking in His fifteenth incarnation the form of a dwarf (Vāmana), He attended the sacrifice offered by Bali and begged as much earth as would be covered by three paces, but with the intention of wresting from his hands the empire of the celestial world. Incensed against the Kshatriyas, who were the enemies of the Brahmanas, He in His sixteenth incarnation (as Paraśurama) extirpated them from the face of the earth twenty-one times running. His seventeenth incarnation was as (Vyāsa) the son of Parāśara, born of Satyavatī. Seeing how meagre men's intellects had become, he divided the Vedas into many branches. In the next incarnation He was born as a king of men (Rama) to compass the ends of the gods, and did mighty deeds of valour such as subduing the sea. The exalted Lord, born among the Vṛshṇis as Rama and Krishna, the nineteenth and twentieth incarnations, rid the earth of its burden. When the Kali age is in full swing, He will be born in the Kīkata regions as the son of Ajana, to confound the enemies of the gods; he will bear the name of Buddha. When the *yuga* approaches its end and kings are no better than marauders, the Lord of the universe will be born as the son of Vishnuyāśas and be known as Kalki (6-25).

The incarnations of Hari, the source of all good, are numberless, O Brahmanas, even as thousands of small streams take their rise from a perennial lake. The *rishis*, the Manus, the gods, the sons of Manus,

¹ The first of the well-known 'Ten Incarnations'. The King Śrāddhadeva became the Manu of the next (Vaivasvata) Manvantara.

² The second of the ten incarnations.

who possessed immense power, as well as the great patriarchs, were all of them fractions of Hari. Some of them were partial incarnations of the Supreme Lord, others, of His divine powers. But Krishna is the Lord Himself. In *yuga* after *yuga* these incarnations bring comfort and relief to a world ravaged by Indra's enemies. The man who, after purifying himself, recites morning and evening, with single-minded devotion, this tale of the mysterious incarnations of the Lord, is released from all sorrows (26-29).

This physical body, wrought by *Mahat* and other products of the Lord's *Māyā*, is imposed on the *Ātman* (the *jīva*), which is formless and compact of pure *chit* (spirit). The ignorant mistakenly take the body (with its properties, such as perceptibility) for the seer (the spirit), even as they think of the bank of clouds (borne on the air) as part of the sky, or of dust from the earth as part of the wind. Apart from this (gross body), there is (also superimposed on the Self) another¹ body, which is subtle and unmanifest, and which, being neither seen nor heard, must be presumed to be composed of *guṇas* which have not combined to produce specific forms. This, it is concluded, is the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*, which is the cause of rebirth. When these two, the gross and the subtle bodies, are sublated by clear cognition of the Self, since they are only projected on the *Ātman* by nescience, the *jīva* is perceived to be the Brahma, Whose essence is *ĵnāna*. When the *Māyā* of the Omniscient Lord that has sported thus becomes quiescent and turns into the means of bringing enlightenment, then, as those who know the truth declare, the *jīva* realizes his perfection as the Brahma, and is exalted in his own glory. Likewise the seers speak of the births and the doings—which are mysteries hidden in the heart of the Veda—of the Lord, Who is the Inner Ruler and Who, in truth, knows neither birth nor activity. He, Whose divine sport knows no frustration, creates, preserves and destroys the universe, but without attachment. The independent Lord, Who is present unseen in all creatures, and is the Controller of the six sense-faculties, merely

¹ *Linga Śarīra* (subtle body).

smells¹ as it were from afar the objects thereof. The man of limited intelligence cannot understand, by mere reasoning, the play of the Supreme Lord, the Creator, Who multiplies forms by thought and names by words (the Veda), any more than the ignorant spectator can recognise the player behind the many roles he plays. But he who by sincere and ceaseless devotion and service has come to savour the fragrance of His lotus feet, will have some knowledge of the playful ways of the Creator of limitless power, the Supreme Lord, the Wielder of the discus (30-38).

You are fortunate indeed, O blessed souls, to be thus absorbed wholly and exclusively in thoughts of Vāsudeva, Lord of all the worlds; which absorption saves one from being caught up again in the terrible cycle of *samsāra*. For the supreme good of the world, the blessed sage composed this Purāṇa called the *Bhāgavatam*, which relates the story of the illustrious Lord and is on a par with the Veda. He taught his son, foremost among those who have realized the Self, this Purāṇa, which extracts the essence of all the Vedas and the epics, and which brings the man who hears it fortune and all happiness. And he delivered it to the great King Parikshit as he sat, surrounded by the great sages, on the bank of the Gangā, under a vow of fasting unto death. As the Brahmana sage of infinite puissance was expounding it there, I, who was present, learnt it by his grace, O Brahmanas. I shall recite it to you as I was taught, and expound it, doing my best according to my lights. Krishna having departed to His own abode along with Dharma, Jñāna and other kindred goods in this Kali Age, this Purāṇa rose like the sun, to make the benighted see again (39-45).

CHAPTER IV

VYĀSA'S SPIRITUAL DISSATISFACTION

Vyāsa said : On hearing what he said, Saunaka, an adept of the Ṛg-Veda, and the oldest of the sages engaged in the long sacrifice, and chief among them,

¹ He is not the experiencer, but He activates the senses.

spoke as follows; Śaunaka said: 'O Sūta, you are fortunate indeed. You should tell us, gifted speaker that you are, the sacred story of the Lord that the blessed sage recited. In what *yuga* was this tale composed, where and for what reason? Under whose prompting did the sage Krishna (Vyāsa) make this collection? His son, the master-yogi, seeing the Brahma everywhere, has transcended all difference, and his mind remains anchored in the One, having shaken off the slumber of nescience. He moves about the world unknown, a dolt to all outward seeming. Once, when the sage was going after his son, the celestial nymphs, abashed, put on their clothes on seeing him, who was himself clothed. Wondering that they had not done so on seeing his son, he questioned them. They replied, 'You are conscious of the difference of the sexes; not so your son, whose eyes are pure.' How did the people know him when he entered the Kuru-jāṅgala country and wandered about Hastināpura, looking like a madman, idiot or deaf-mute? And how, my son, did the colloquy between the royal sage, the descendant of Pāndu, and the sage (Suka), come to take place, giving rise to this scripture that exalts the Lord Vishnu? The blessed one, as is well known, stops at the doors of householders for no longer than it takes to milk a cow and that, too, only to sanctify those abodes (1-8).

'They say that Abhimanyu's son (Parikshit) was the greatest of the devotees of the Lord. O Sūta, tell us of his wonderful birth and of his deeds. Why did the emperor, the enhancer of the prestige of the Pāndus, enter on a fast unto death on the bank of the Gangā, turning his back on the opulence of empire? How did that heroic one, at whose footstool his enemies bowed their heads, offering all their wealth to secure their own well-being, come to throw away with his life, in the bloom of youth, my dear, that affluence which it is so hard to relinquish? Those who put their sole trust in the illustrious Lord live, not for themselves, but for the happiness of the world, its affluence and prosperity; how then could he, even if disgusted with life, bring himself to discard his body, which was the stay and prop of others? Tell us all that we have wished

to know of you. We look upon you as one who has attained mastery of all knowledge other than what is contained in the Veda¹' (9-13).

The Sūta answered : When the Dvāpara-yuga, the third of the revolving *yugas*, was well advanced, there was born to Parāśara, of the daughter of a Vasu,² the sage who represented a digit of Hari. One day, having purified himself by bathing in the Sarasvati, he sat on its bank in a lonely place at sunrise. The sage, who knew the past and the future, had, with the eye of wisdom, seen how time, stealing swiftly over the world, brought about confusion of the Dharmas that pertained to the different *yugas*, and the decay of the strength of all physical entities. He had seen, too, how men had lost faith and courage and were unintelligent, short-lived and unlucky. With his unfailing insight, he had considered what would make for the good of all *varṇas* and *āśramas* and decided that the offering of sacrifices through the agency of four priests, as prescribed in the Vedas, could alone purify the people. And he had divided the one Veda into four collections to ensure the continuance of the institution of sacrifice. The Vedas, known as the Ṛk, the Yajus, the Sāman and the Atharvaṇa, were thus separated. The epic and the Purāṇas are known as the fifth Veda (14-20).

Paila learnt the Ṛg. Veda from him ; the seer Jaimini was the propagator of the Sāma Veda ; Vaiśampāyana was the only one who attained complete proficiency in the Yajur Veda. The cruel sage Sumantu learnt the Atharva Veda, and my father Romaharṣaṇa, the epic and the Purāṇas. These *ṛishis* each divided his own Veda into many parts ; and the Vedas branched out, through their pupils, to the pupils of their pupils, and so on. It was his compassion for men of poor understanding that had prompted the blessed sage thus to divide the Veda, so that even those of meagre intelligence could learn and retain it. And the sage had composed the *Bhārata*, prompted by the same feeling, in the hope that women, Sūdras and the fallen among the twice-born might uplift themselves by this means,

¹ Being born of a *pratiloma* caste, he could not study the Veda.

² Called Uparichara Vasu.

since they could not hear the Vedas, and remained ignorant of the *karmas* through which they might attain the supreme good (21-25).

But though he had thus thrown himself heart and soul into the task of promoting the good of all beings, he knew no satisfaction. As he, who knew Dharma, sat in that lonely place on the holy bank of the Sarasvati, he pondered over the cause of this secret dissatisfaction. 'Having taken the appropriate vows, I have duly honoured the Vedas, my *Gurus* and the sacred fires with all sincerity and obeyed their injunctions. While in form narrating the story of the *Bhārata*, I brought out the purport of the Veda, so that even women, Sūdras and others can learn of Dharma and other ends of life. And yet, though I am foremost among those that are endowed with the lustre of Vedic knowledge, and my *jīva* is in truth perfect, it does not seem to have realized its identity with its essential Self. Could it be because I have not dealt at length with the *dharma*s that lead to the Lord,¹ which are very dear to the supreme renouncers, because the Lord is pleased with them?' (26-31).

As Krishna Dvaipāyana thus sat there, weighed down by the feeling that his life had remained unfulfilled, Nārada came to that hermitage of his. Seeing that it was Nārada who had come, the sage got up in all haste and went forward to receive him. And with all due ceremony he worshipped Nārada, whom the gods themselves honoured (32-33).

CHAPTER V

HOW NĀRADA BECAME A DEVOTEE

The Sūta went on : Seated comfortably, the divine sage of great renown, who carried the *vīṇā*, spoke with a faint smile on his face to the Brahmana sage who was seated by his side. 'O fortunate son of Parāśara, are you satisfied with the state of your body and mind? You have surely gained all the knowledge that you

¹ The practice of devotion.

could wish for ; for you have composed that great and marvellous work, the *Bhārata*, which deals in full with all the ends of life. Besides, you have engaged in the inquiry regarding the eternal and supreme Brahma and attained it. And yet you seem sad, like one who has not realized his cherished desire, supremely capable as you are' (1-4).

Vyāsa said in reply, 'It is true that I have all that you have mentioned ; still I am not glad at heart. I would like to know the cause of this dejection, which is by no means clear to me. You, the son of the Self-created, endowed with unfathomable wisdom, can tell me. The most profound mysteries are known to you, honoured sir, because you have given your ardent devotion to the Primordial Lord, the Controller of the world of cause and effect, Who, being Himself unattached to aught else, creates the universe, protects and destroys it by a mere act of will by means of the *guṇas*. You traverse the three worlds like the sun and move inside all beings like the life-breath, and thus know the workings of their minds. Please think and tell me what it is that I still lack, though I have obtained knowledge of the Supreme Brahma by the practice of Dharma (yoga), and mastered the Veda, submitting myself to the appropriate discipline' (5-7).

Nārada told him, 'You have done very little by way of singing the immaculate glory of the exalted Lord. I consider that *jnāna* inadequate which, because it is not accompanied by such praise, does not please the Lord. You have not, O foremost of sages, expatiated on the greatness of Vāsudeva as you have done on Dharma and other ends of life. That composition which, however attractively worded, does not celebrate the fame of Hari, which sanctifies the world, is compared to the foul stink to which the crows flock, but which the swans of Mānasa, whose abode is lovely, do not care for. But that work which, though full of solecisms, contains in every verse the names of Ananta that remind one of His famous deeds, destroys the sins of the world. These are the names that the saintly chant or extol to others, or themselves listen to when others proclaim them. Even that knowledge of the unqualified Brahma which

puts an end to all *karma* is not enough to bring enlightenment, if it is not accompanied by devotion to Achyuta. How then will that *karma* redeem, which is always attended with sorrow and suffering, or even the *karma* done disinterestedly, if it is not dedicated to the Supreme Lord?¹ Therefore, O fortunate one, you who, with your unerring vision and your devotion to truth, have lived a disciplined life and won unsullied fame, should recollect and recount with one-pointed attention the various exploits of the exalted Lord, to enable all men to be freed from bondage (8-13).

‘If a man’s mind were set on other things and he wished to talk about them, it would be so distracted by the names and forms that that desire would conjure up, that he would find it difficult to settle down to a consideration of any one thing, even as a boat on the water, buffeted by the wind, cannot remain in one place. In urging people, in the name of Dharma, to devote themselves to the performance of those *karmanas* to which they feel naturally drawn, but which are not commendable, you have done wrong; since the generality of men, being confirmed by your words in the view that that is Dharma, will not lend ear to those who attempt to dissuade them. Only the man of discriminating judgement can, by abjuring all activity, know the Bliss that is the essence of the Infinite and All-pervading Lord. Therefore, O capable one, you should bring the man who, infatuated with the body and the like, involves himself in activity urged by the *guṇas*, to a vivid realization of the exploits of the All-powerful Lord. If a man who, neglecting the duties enjoined on him, devotes himself wholly to the worship of Hari’s lotus feet, falls by the way (or dies) before he has achieved ripeness, no evil will befall him, wherever he might find himself.² On the other hand, what do those who do not worship the Lord gain by adherence to their own *dharma*? The intelligent man should strive to gain that which is not obtained by the *jīvas* who are caught up in the vortex of births, high or low. The other kind of happiness

¹ Karma whether done disinterestedly or with the desire for the fruits thereof will be futile, if it is done without devotion. ² However low the birth which he may have taken.

comes to one, even as misery does, from other causes,¹ brought by time in its insidious flight. Ah! the devotee of Mukunda will never, in no circumstances, fall into the abyss of *samsāra* like another. Remembering how he had embraced Mukunda's feet, he will not leave them again, being irresistibly drawn by their sweetness (14-19).

'The universe is the Lord Himself; but He is distinct from the universe². It is because of Him that it comes into being, exists, and suffers destruction. This you yourself know very well. I have merely given you a brief indication of this truth. You of the unerring intuition should know that you are in truth birthless, but have taken birth as a partial incarnation of the Almighty Lord, the Paramātman, to promote the welfare of the worlds. Therefore devote yourself to the task of describing with all fullness the exploits of the Lord, Who is supremely great. For the wise are certain that singing the praises of the glorious virtues of the illustrious Lord is the eternal gain that accrues to a man from the austerities that he practises, the Vedic knowledge he has obtained, the sacrifices he has offered, the skill in the exposition of the Veda that he has acquired, the knowledge he has gathered, and the gifts he has made (20-22).

'O sage, I was, in a former birth in the last Kalpa, the son of a Sūdra servant-maid of men who were well-versed in the Vedas. While still a child, I was made to serve some yogis who wished to remain in one place for the duration of the rainy season. Though they looked upon all with equal benevolence, they were kind to me who, a mere child, put away my playthings and served them obediently and well, speaking little, behaving with restraint and without the least trace of flightiness. I once ate, with the Brahmanas' permission, the leftovers after they had taken their food, and was thus cleansed of my sins. And when my heart was purified by this mode of life, I was attracted to the Dharma (of devoted service to the Lord) which they had made their own. There, by the grace of those who sang aloud the exploits

¹ As the result of past *Karma*. ² (alt.) 'The world is the Lord Himself, and so is the *jīva*, though seemingly different' (S).

of Krishna every day, I was allowed to listen to those ravishing tales. And as I hung on every word that they said with a fervour that was innate, I came to love Him, my dear, Whose glory is sweet to hear of. When I thus came to love Him of the engaging fame, there was borne in upon me an unalterable conviction. I directly perceived that these bodies, gross and subtle, were projected by my own nescience on Me, the Brahma That is beyond the phenomenal worlds (23-27).

‘As I thus listened regularly thrice a day, throughout the rainy season and the autumn, to the immaculate glory of Hari sung by the high-souled sages, there grew in my heart the devotion that frees one from *rajas* and *tamas*. When I had thus been cleansed of my sins, and they found me loving, humble and attentive as well as self-controlled and dutiful in their service, though still a child, they, who loved the lowly, taught me out of their abundant kindness, when they were about to leave, the extremely secret *Sāstra* (the *Bhāgavatam*) which the Lord Himself had revealed. Through that *Sāstra* I became aware of the mighty power of Māyā of the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Creator, by gaining knowledge of which men reach His abode. And it was broadly indicated to me, O Brahman, that the cure for the three kinds of ills was the dedication of all *karma* to the exalted and Paramount Lord, Who is eternally perfect. A substance that breeds disease in living creatures will not, O you of the steadfast vows, effect a cure thereof, if used as it is. But, if it is suitably medicated, it does. Even thus, while all *karmas* lead to involvement in *samsāra*, they are annulled when they are dedicated to the Transcendent Lord (28-34).

‘The knowledge that goes hand in hand with deep devotion to the Lord is itself the outcome of the *karmas* done in this world for propitiating Him. When men are engaged in doing all actions as the Lord has enjoined, they repeatedly extol the virtues and the names of Śrī Krishna, and their minds also dwell on Him. “We make our salutations mentally to Thee, the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, to Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Sankarshana.” He who thus worships the Lord of the sacrifice, Who has no form, in the forms described in the *mantra*, by

reciting that *mantra* which reveals His names, achieves the fullest enlightenment. Knowing, O Brahman, that I had followed the way that He himself had taught, Keśava granted me knowledge and supernatural powers, as well as the gift of loving Him. Therefore you too, with your extensive knowledge of the *Sāstra*, should proclaim the Omnipresent Lord's far-flung fame; by knowing which the longing of the learned for knowledge is satisfied, while the wise are assured that only that and nothing else can put an end to the misery of those who are repeatedly afflicted by sorrows' (35-40).

CHAPTER VI

NĀRADA ASKS VYĀSA TO EXALT THE GLORY OF GOD

The Sūta continued: The blessed Vyāsa, son of Satya-vatī, having heard the account of the divine sage's birth and deeds, again questioned him, O Brahman. Vyāsa asked: 'When the ascetics who had enlightened you had gone far away, what did you, who were yet a child, do, venerable sir? And, O son of the Self-existent, how did you live for the rest of your life? How did you discard that body of yours when the time came? How is it, O best of celestials, that time, which obliterates everything, did not blot out your memory of what took place in a former *Kalpa*?' (1-4)

Nārada replied, 'When the ascetics who had brought me enlightenment had left for far places, this was what I, still a boy, did. My mother, an ignorant woman engaged in service, was knit by the bonds of affection to me, her only child, wholly dependent on her. Being subject to the will of others, she could do nothing to provide for my future, much as she wished to do so. Like the wooden puppet fashioned in the image of a woman is the world wholly in the hands of the Lord. And I, being but a five-year-old child, who knew nothing about directions, time or place, went on living in that Brahmana household in expectation of the time (when my mother's affection would no longer be there to detain me) (5-8).

‘Once, when she went out at night to milk the cow, she trod on a snake that lay in the way, and it bit the poor helpless woman, as fate would have it. Looking upon it as a blessing from the Supreme Lord, Who desires the welfare of His devotees, I forthwith departed for the North. I passed, all alone, leaving behind me prosperous countries, cities, villages, cowherd colonies, miners’ camps, farmers’ settlements, mountain hamlets, gardens, woods, groves, mountain ranges with rich and variegated veins of ore, on which grew trees whose branches elephants tore down, lakes of pure water, and lotus pools which were frequented by the celestials and were adorned by the roving black bees awakened by the melodious notes of birds. And then I came upon a great forest, impenetrable with its tangle of bulrushes, bamboos, solid and hollow, reeds and *kuśa* grass ; horrid and menacing, it was the playground of venomous snakes, owls and jackals. Tired and weary in every limb, plagued by hunger and thirst, I bathed in the pool in a river-bed and drank of it, and performing *āchamana* was refreshed. Sitting down at the foot of a peepul tree in that unpeopled forest, I concentrated my mind on the Paramātmā seated in the heart, as I had been instructed (9-16).

‘When I contemplated on His lotus feet with a mind overwhelmed by devotion, and my eyes filled with tears of longing, Hari slowly showed Himself in the depths of my heart. The hair on my body bristling in the ecstasy of love, I was supremely content ; submerged by the tides of bliss, I¹ saw neither myself nor the Supreme Lord, O sage. When that blessed form of the Lord, which gladdened the heart and dispelled all grief, suddenly disappeared, I started up in a great agitation, overcome with grief. Eager to see that blessed figure again, I steadied my mind within my heart and looked, but did not see it, and I was distraught, not being content with what I had seen. As I went on trying, in that lonely forest, He Who is beyond the reach of words spoke to me in a voice that was at once so sublime and sweet, it almost seemed to assuage my grief : “ Ah ! poor soul, you cannot see Me here in this life ; because men who

¹ (Lit.) ‘I saw not both, O sage.’

have not achieved *yogic* perfection by the burning up of their impurities cannot have sight of me. You were given a fleeting glimpse of My form to make you love Me intensely, O sinless one. The man who thus longs for Me is freed from all evils and sheds all desires. By virtue of your service to the saintly, brief though it was, you have become firmly devoted to Me. On discarding this miserable body, you shall gain a place among My personal attendants. By My grace this staunch devotion that you have given Me shall never wane; and your remembrance of the past shall not grow dim even when the worlds are destroyed" (17-25).

'Having said this, the Great Spirit, the Supreme Ruler Whose image is in the Void of the heart but Who is invisible, ceased speaking. Thus vouchsafed His grace, I bowed my head in adoration to Him Who is greater than the greatest. Reciting the names of the Infinite Lord endlessly, untroubled by false shame, and treasuring in my heart those sacred mysteries, His auspicious names and exploits, I wandered over the earth with a contented mind free from all desire; and without pride or envy I looked forward to the time (of release). As I thus lived, with my mind wholly given to Krishna and my heart pure and free from all other attachments, death came at the appointed time like a flash of lightning from the Sudāmā hills, O Brahman. When I was being led by the Lord towards that immaculate body which houses the retainer of the Lord, the body composed of the five elements, the result of the *Karma* that had come to fruition, fell. When, at the end of the *Kalpa*, the Lord Brahmā wished to rest in Him (Narayana) Who, having withdrawn the universe into Himself, lay on the waters of what was now one vast sea, I slipped into his heart as he drew in his breath. When he got up at the end of a thousand *yugas* to create the worlds, we, Marīchi and the rest, were born from his various organs (26-31).

'Observing by the Grace of Mahāviṣṇu the unbroken vow of celibacy, I go about the three worlds and beyond them, my movements absolutely unimpeded. Playing on this *vīṇā* given me by the Lord, which is tuned to the seven notes that bring the bliss of Brahma,

I wander chanting the glory of Hari. As I sing aloud His exploits, He Whose feet purify and Whose fame is sweet to the ear, quickly presents Himself in my heart as if summoned. It has been established by experience that the frequent recital of the doings of Hari is the one raft available for crossing the sea of *samsāra* to those who are distraught with perpetual hankering for the pleasures of the senses. The mind that is plagued by desire and greed is not directly restored to tranquillity by the various *yogic* practices, such as the disciplining of the senses, as it is by the worship of Mukunda. And now I have answered all your questions, O blameless one, and told you the secret story of my birth and doings, as well as how your mind may achieve contentment' (32-37).

The Sūta concluded: Having thus spoken with Vāsavi's son, the blessed sage Nārada, who lived as the spirit moved him,¹ took leave of him and departed, sounding the *vīṇā*. Ah! How supremely blest is the divine sage, who is intoxicated with delight as he sings the fame of the Wielder of the bow Sārṅga and rejoices this world of suffering with the music of his instrument! (38-39).

CHAPTER VII

DRAUPADI'S CHILDREN SLAIN

Saunaka asked: 'When Nārada had left, what did the blessed one, the supremely capable Bādarāyaṇa do, O Sūta, having heard what Nārada said?' (1).

The Sūta said: On the western bank of the Sarasvatī, the river whose tutelary deity is Brahmā, there is a hermitage known as Samyāprāsa which is advantageously situated for sacrifices. Sitting down in that hermitage of his, beautiful with its grove of jujube trees, Vyāsa performed *āchamana* and steadied his mind by an effort of will. When his mind, purified by devotion, was well stilled, he beheld therein, first, the Supreme Lord, and then Māyā which is dependent on Him, and

¹ 'He was one who never willed anything for his own benefit' (S).

deluded by which the *jīva*, though in truth different from the *guṇas*, regards himself as the product thereof and draws upon himself the disastrous consequences. And he saw, too, that these evils could be put an end to only by the practice of direct devotion to Adhokshaja. And for the benefit of the world, which does not know these truths, the enlightened one composed the *Bhāgavatam*, the scripture *par excellence* of the devotees of the Lord Vishnu; in the very act of hearing it recited, one becomes imbued with that devotion to Krishna, the Supreme Lord, which destroys grief, delusion and fear. Having composed this collection known as the *Bhāgavatam*, and arranged it properly and scrutinized it, the sage taught it to his son Suka, who had resolutely turned his face away from the world (2-8).

Saunaka here remarked, 'That sage, being intent on withdrawal from the world, and delighting only in the Self, was indifferent to all other things. What impelled him to learn this voluminous work?' (9)

The Sūta answered: Even the sages who delight in the Self and have snapped¹ the knot of the heart, give the Lord of the mighty strides the devotion that asks for no return; for such is the nature of Hari. The blessed sage, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, learnt this great chronicle because his heart was captivated by the glorious qualities of Hari, and His devotees were ever dear to him (10-11).

The Sūta then went on with his tale: I shall now relate the birth, exploits and death of Parikshit, the royal sage, and the starting by the sons of Pāṇdu on their last journey; which will serve as an introduction to the story of Krishna. When the great warriors of the Kaurava and Śrñjaya clans had fought and gone to the heaven of the heroes, and the son of Dhṛtarāshtra, Duryodhana, had his thigh broken by the mace hurled by Vṛkodara, the son of Droṇa (Aśvatthāmā) cut off the heads of Draupadi's sleeping children, and brought them to Duryodhana, imagining that it would please his master, whereas in truth it revolted him, since all men would condemn that odious act. The mother of the infants, hearing of their dread-

¹ (alt.) 'who have given up all study of books.'

ful death, wept her eyes out for her children in an agony of suffering (12-15).

Pacifying her, the wearer of the many-crested crown (Arjuna) said, 'I shall wipe your tears, my gentle one, when I have cut off the head of that despicable Brahmana assassin, with arrows sped from the bow Gāndīva, and brought it to you, and you, planting your foot on it, have taken your bath after the cremation of your sons.' Having comforted his beloved with such appealing and vivid words, he who had Achyuta for his friend and charioteer, put on coat of mail, and armed with his fierce bow, pursued his preceptor's son, riding in his chariot, which flew the flag with the device of the ape. Seeing him from afar, coming in hot pursuit, the child-murderer, his heart quaking in terror, fled by chariot as far as he could go, in his desperate anxiety to save his life, as Brahmā had fled from the wrath of Rudra. When his horses were too tired to go farther, the Brāhmana's son, finding himself defenceless, decided that he could save himself only by launching the Brahmāstra. Purifying himself with water and concentrating his mind on its deity, he sped that weapon, though he did not know how to recall it, because his life was in peril (15-20).

Seeing the fierce blaze that spread out from it in all directions and the imminent threat to life it spelt, Arjuna appealed to Vishnu (Krishna). Arjuna said: 'Krishna, O Krishna, illustrious Lord That assurest Thy devotees freedom from fear, Thou alone destroyest the endless cycle of births and deaths for those that are caught in it and burn. Thou art none other than the Supreme Lord Himself, the Purusha That transcends Prakṛti, the First Cause. Dismissing Māyā by Thy power of intelligence, Thou art ever established in the experience of the pure bliss of the Self. And thus established, Thou dealest out, by Thine own puissance, to all creatures that are deluded by Māyā, the blessings of Dharma and other ends of life. And Thou art now incarnate on earth to rid the earth of its burden and to enable Thy people, and those who give Thee their exclusive devotion, to meditate on Thee without intermission. O God of gods, I do not know what this is and whence it

comes—this dreadful fire that advances in all directions' (21-26).

The Lord told him, 'This is the Brahmāstra that the son of Droṇa launched when his life was in danger. But he does not know how to recall it ; whereas you do. No other weapon can annihilate this. Meet and put down its extraordinary power with the same weapon of like potency. You are skilled in the use of the weapon' (27-28).

The Sūta went on : Hearing what the Lord said, Phālguna, destroyer of enemy hosts, performed *āchamana* and, going reverently round Krishna, launched his Brahmāstra against the other Brahmāstra. The scorching fire of the two missiles,¹ covering the arrows, mingled and grew into a mighty conflagration enveloping earth and sky and the upper air, like the sun and fire joining (during Pralaya). When they saw those fierce flames from the weapons scorching the three worlds, all creatures who were distraught by that terrible heat feared that it was the fire that consumes the world. Taking note of the universal distress and the dire peril to the worlds, and understanding what Vāsudeva wished him to do, Arjuna recalled both weapons. Then, his eyes red with anger, he pounced upon the cruel son of Gautamī and bound him as the sacrificial animal is bound with ropes. When Arjuna, having forcibly bound the foe with cords, was taking him to his camp, the Lord of the lotus eyes told him indignantly, 'You should not spare him, son of Prthā. Kill the Brahmana dastard who slaughtered innocent children in their sleep at night. No man who knows Dharma will kill his enemy if he is in a state of intoxication or is off his guard, if he is mad or asleep, or if the enemy is a child, a woman or one who is apathetic ; or if he throws himself on the mercy of his opponent, or has had his chariot destroyed under him, or is cravenly afraid. To slay this pitiless blackguard, who pampers his own life by sacrificing others, would be to do him a service, as otherwise he would go to hell for his sin. And, remember, you promised Pāṇchālī in my hearing, "I shall bring you the head of the murderer of your children, my proud

¹ The translation follows V. here.

queen". Therefore, O valiant one, kill this wicked fellow, the murderous villain who slew your children, doing what was grossly repugnant to his master's feelings and dragging his own family's name in the dust' (29-39).

The Sūta said : When he was thus urged by Krishna, Who wished to test his fidelity to Dharma, Pārtha, being the magnanimous man that he was, would not kill him, his Guru's son, though he was the murderer of his children. Going to his camp, he who had Govinda for his friend and charioteer, showed him (Aśvatthāmā) to his beloved, who mourned her children slain. When he was thus brought in, bound with cords like a sacrificial animal, hanging down his head in shame for the revolting deed he had done, Krishnā, who was of a noble disposition, looked with compassion at him who had grievously wronged her ; and as she made her obeisance to the Guru's son she, who could not bear to see him brought in bound thus, cried, ' Free him, free him instantly ; he is a Brahmana, and supremely worthy of reverence. This is the venerable Droṇa himself, re-born in his son, he by whose grace you learnt the science of archery, with all the secret spells, and obtained the entire range of weapons powered by the gods, and the knowledge of how to launch and how to recall them. And his wife Kṛpī, his very half, still lives ; she did not follow him in death, being the mother of a son. O magnanimous one who know the Law, you should not plunge the family of your Guru in sorrow ; you should ever hold it in honour and respect. Let not his mother Gautamī, whose husband was her god, weep as I do incessantly with tear-filled face for my dead children. The Brahmana family which is provoked to wrath by unregenerate Kshattriyas, plunges them in grief and burns up their entire clan with all its following ' (40-48).

The Sūta said : The King Dharmaputra, O Brahmanas, approved those words of his queen, informed by Dharma and the spirit of reason, and instinct with compassion and sincerity, imaginative sympathy and nobility of heart. And so did Nakula and Sahadeva, Yuyudhāna (Sātyaki) and Dhananjaya, the exalted Lord, the son of Devaki, and others, men and women,

who were present. But the indignant Bhīma said, 'It has been said that it is far better for the like of him to be slain, for he wantonly killed sleeping children, serving no purpose, either his own or his master's'. Having heard what Bhīma and Draupadi said, the Lord of the four arms looked at His friend, and spoke with a quizzical smile. The Lord said, 'Even an unworthy Brahmana may not be killed. But the man who comes with intent to kill deserves to die. I myself am the author of both ordainments. You should comply with both of them. Make good your promise to your beloved when you consoled her, and at the same time do what would be pleasing to Bhīmasena, Pāṇchālī and Myself' (49-54).

The Sūta said: Immediately realizing what Hari meant, Arjuna cut off with his sword the crest-jewel on the head of the Brahmana, along with his tuft. Then, freeing him, who was bound with cords, he dismissed from the camp the man whose lustre had been tarnished by child murder and who was now shorn alike of his jewel and his glory. For the Brahmana by birth there is no capital punishment prescribed; the shaving off of the hair on the head, the forfeiture of wealth, and exile take its place. Then the Pāṇdavas and Draupadi, grieving for their children, did the funeral rites for their dead kin (55-58).

CHAPTER VIII

THE LORD SAVES PARIKSHIT: KUNTI EXTOLS HIM

The Sūta said: With a view to offering water libations to the spirits of their dead kin who would desire them, they went to the river Gangā with Krishna, the women going first. After offering libations and making lament, all of them bathed again in the water sanctified by the dust of the lotus feet of Hari. Mādhava and the sages consoled the King of the Kurus and his brothers, Dhṛtarāshtra, Gāndhārī, who was distraught with grief for her sons, Kuntī and Draupadi,

all of whom sat there grieving for their dead kith and kin ; pointing out that there was no resisting time's way with all creatures (1-4).

Having seen to it that the King Ajātaśatru got back his kingdom, which dishonest men had taken from him by fraud, and the wicked, who had already forfeited their lives by laying unlawful hands on Draupadi's tresses, went to their doom, He helped him (the King) to offer three horse-sacrifices of the highest standard of excellence, and thus spread his spotless fame in all directions, as the fame of Indra is spread. Then He took leave of Pāndu's sons, and honouring Dvaipāyana and others and receiving their warm commendation, He got into His chariot, O Brahman, with Sātyaki and Uddhava, intending to leave for Dvārakā ; when He saw Uttarā come running towards Him in terror and dismay. Uttarā cried, ' Save me, O mighty yogi, save me, O God of gods, O Master of the worlds ! I can see none but Thee Who is free from fear where everyone is the death of everyone else. A red-hot arrow pursues me, Almighty Lord ; let it burn me up if it will, but, O Lord, let it not cast out the child in my womb ' (5-10).

The Sūta said : Taking in what she said, the Lord, Who loves His devotees, realized that the arrow had been shot by the son of Droṇa to exterminate the Pāndavas. Seeing at the same moment five blazing arrows coming towards them, the Pāndavas snatched their weapons, great sage. The Almighty Lord saw how desperate was the plight of those who gave their whole-hearted allegiance to Him ; and He ordained the protection of His devotees by His own weapon Sudarśana. Taking His stand within her, Hari, the master-yogi, the Soul in all creatures, covered the foetus in the womb of the King of Virāta's daughter, by the power of His own *Yoga-Māyā*, in order to preserve the line of the Kurus. Though the Brahmāstra cannot fail of its effect, or be rendered nugatory by any other weapon, it was extinguished when confronted by the fire¹ of Vishnu, O first of the Bhṛgus. You must not wonder that Achyuta could do this, since He is all that is wonderful, and being Himself birthless, contrives the creation, preserva-

¹ His discus.

tion and destruction of the universe by His resplendent Māyā (11-16).

In the company of her sons, who had been saved from the Brahmāstra, and Draupadi, that good woman Kuntī addressed Krishna, when He was on the point of starting on His journey. Kuntī said: 'Ignorant woman that I am, I can only make my humble prostrations to Thee, the Primordial Lord, Who is beyond Prakṛti, being its Controller, and Who is within and without all that exists, but invisible, hidden by the curtain of Māyā; and Who is Immutable and beyond the reach of the senses. The purblind¹ man does not know Thee as Thou truly art, even as the ignorant man does not distinguish between the actor and the role he plays. How indeed can we women know truly Thee That art incarnate to inspire love for the way of devotion in those contemplatives who are capable of distinguishing the real from the unreal and are pure of heart? I make my salutations to Krishna, the son of Vasudeva and the delight of Devaki, to Govinda, Nanda Gopa's little boy. Let me make my prostrations again and again to Thee, Lord of the lotus navel, Wearer of the lotus garland, with eyes like the lotus flower, and feet that bear the lotus mark. To Thee, O Hṛshikeśa, Devaki owed her release after she had been kept long in confinement by the blackguard (Kamsa) and eaten out her heart in grief. But I and my sons were repeatedly saved by Thee from numberless perils, O Paramount Lord of the worlds. Thou didst save us, O Hari, from poison and a great conflagration, and bring us safely through in our encounter with the cannibal; Thou hast been our saviour against the designs of an unjust assembly, the perils of the forest life, the weapons of many a super-charioteer in battle after battle, and the celestial weapon launched by the son of Droṇa (17-24).

'Let repeated misfortunes be our lot, O Mentor of the worlds, if they will bring us a glimpse of Thee, which will suffice to put an end to this endless cycle of birth and death! The man who is overweeningly proud of his high birth, wealth, learning and prosperity, cannot even utter Thy name; but Thou art readily accessi-

¹ The man who identifies himself with the body (S).

ble to those that have renounced all possessions. I make my prostrations to Him Who looks upon His devotees, who have discarded all possessions, as His wealth ; Who finds all delight in the Self, and is beyond the reach of the modes of the three *guṇas* ; Who knows unruffled peace and is the Dispenser of liberation. I look upon Thee as time that rules all things, as the Omnipresent Lord Who knows neither beginning nor end, and Who deals impartially with all creatures, though because of Thee there is strife between them. No one knows, O Lord, what Thou really hast in mind when Thou seemest to follow the ways of the world. So men differ in their notions of Thee, though Thou hast really neither friend nor foe. What else, except extreme playfulness on Thy part, could account for the fact that Thou, O Soul of the universe, Who knowest neither birth nor activity, appearest to be born among brutes and men, among sages and aquatic animals and performest remarkable exploits ? I am bewildered as I recall the state in which I saw Thee when the Gopi took a rope to Thee for Thy mischief—standing there hanging down Thy head, the eyes bedaubed with tears mixed with *kohl* and flitting hither and thither as if Thou wert afraid—Thou of whom fear itself goes in fear ! Some speak of Thee, the Birthless, as being incarnate in the family of Yadu, that man of good repute¹, who was dear to Thee, in order to spread his fame, even as the sandal tree bruits abroad the fame of the Malaya mountain. Others say that Thou wert born as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva, as they had ardently desired, to ensure the welfare of the worlds and compass the destruction of the enemies of the gods. Yet others say that Thou wert born in response to the prayer of the Self-existent, to rid the earth of the intolerable burden under which it groaned like a ship at sea. Some hold that Thou wert born with the purpose of performing exploits which should be heard and cherished in their hearts by men who, born in this world, suffer the consequences of *karma*, prompted by the desires that nescience breeds. It is those people that hear the tales that are told of Thy deeds, or themselves sing

¹ This attribute may apply to Yudhishtira also.

them or extol them constantly, dwell on them in their thoughts, or listen and applaud when others recite them—it is they who ere long see Thy lotus feet, which end for them the never-ending succession of births (25-36).

‘And must Thou go away this very day, O Lord—Thou That art so zealous in the work of Thy devotees—leaving us, Thy friends and dependants, who, having brought sorrow and suffering to the Kings, have no refuge but Thy lotus feet? When Thy glance no longer rests upon us, of what account should we be, Pāṇdavas or Yadus, who are now famed and prosperous, even as there would be neither name nor fame if the senses were not activated by the *jīva*? When Thou has left, O Wielder of the mace, this realm will not shine as it does now, adorned by Thy footprints with their unique marks. It is by virtue of the glance that Thou castest on them that these regions, with their ripening corn and abundant vegetation, their forests, hills, rivers and seas, prosper and flourish (37-40).

‘O Master and Soul of the universe, Who hast the universe for Thy body, sever, I pray Thee, the strong bonds of love that bind me to the Pāṇdavas and the Vṛshṇis. O Lord of the Madhus, may my mind, discarding all other thoughts, find constant delight in directing all its love to Thee, as the Gangā in flood hastes to the sea. O gracious Krishna, Companion of Arjuna, O First of the Vṛshṇis, O forest fire that hast consumed the Kshattriya clans who oppressed the earth, O Lord Whose power is undiminished, O Govinda That hast taken this body to end the sufferings of the gods, the Brahmanas and the cows, O Master of yoga and Mentor of the worlds, I make my humble prostrations to Thee’ (40-43).

The Sūta said: ‘The Lord of Vaikuntha, Whose manifold glory was thus extolled by Pṛthā in sweet words, smiled gently, beguiling her with the magic of that smile. Telling her, ‘You shall have your wish,’ He entered the city of Gajāhvaya (Hastināpura) and took leave of her and the other womenfolk. But when He wanted to leave for His own city, the King in his great love would not let him go yet (44-45).

Though Vyāsa and others, who did not know the designs of the Lord, tried their best to enlighten the King, by citing many historical and other legends, and Krishna Himself, He of the inscrutable ways, seconded their efforts, the King, being overwhelmed with grief, could not be awakened to the truth. Because his mind, which lacked discrimination, brooded constantly on the slaying of his kinsmen, the King Yudhishtira succumbed to the delusion engendered by affection, O Brahmanas, and he exclaimed in agony, 'Alas, look at wicked me, with ignorance firmly entrenched in the heart, how many *akshauhīnīs* I have sent to their death for the sake of this body, which is other people's property ! Even after the lapse of thousands upon thousands of years there can be no release from hell for me, the betrayer of children, Brahmanas, friends, allies, fathers, brothers and preceptors. The dictum of the lawgivers, that the slaying of the foe in a righteous war for the protection of his subjects is no sin in a King, will not avail me.¹ By the performance of *karmas* that devolve on the householder I shall not be able to expiate my sin for the injury I have done to the women whose near and dear ones have been slain. No man can wipe off the infamy of killing a single creature by the offering of sacrifices, any more than one can remove the stain caused by dirty water with a handful of dirt, or expiate the sin of taking a little liquor by swilling large quantities of it' (46-52).

CHAPTER IX

BHĪSHMA'S HYMN OF PRAISE

The Sūta said : Thus labouring under the fear of having grievously wronged humanity, and desiring to hear about every kind of Dharma, he went to the battle-field of Kurukshetra, where Devavrata had fallen. All his brothers followed him in chariots drawn by splendid steeds and decked with gold ; so did the Brahmanas,

¹ Because it was not undertaken in defence of his own people against an aggressor.

Vyāsa, Dhaumya and others. And the exalted Lord, too, went accompanied by Dhananjaya, riding in a chariot. In their company the King shone like Kubera attended by the Guhyakas. On seeing Bhīshma fallen on the ground like an immortal fallen from heaven, the Pāṇdavas prostrated themselves before him along with their followers and the Wielder of the discus. Just then all the Brahmarshis and the celestial sages, as well as the foremost of the royal sages, arrived there, O best of men, to see the chief of the Bharatas. Parvata and Nārada were there, and Dhaumya, the venerable Bādarāyaṇa, Brhadaśva, Bhāradwāja and Paraśurāma the son of Reṇukā with his disciples, as well as Vasishtha, Indrapramada, Trita, Gr̥thsamada, Asita, Kakshīvān, Gautama, Atri, Kauśika and Sudarśana. Other sages of spotless purity, such as Brahmarāta (Suka), and Kaśyapa and the son of Angiras (Bṛhaspati) came with their disciples (1-8).

On seeing those great souls who had come, he who was the foremost of the Vasus, and well-versed in Dharma, honoured them in the manner appropriate to the time and place. And knowing His greatness, he worshipped Krishna, the Lord of the universe, Who had taken a body by His own power of Māyā, and Who was now seated before Him, even as He was installed in his own heart. With eyes blinded by the tears of love he looked at the sons of Pāṇdu, who were sitting near him deferentially, their demeanour marked by affection and regard, (and thus spoke): 'Alas ! how disgraceful and unjust that you, O sons of Dharma, who are devoted to the Brahmanas, to Dharma, and to Achyuta, should have had to lead such hard lives ! After the death of the super-charioteer Pāṇdu, Pṛthā, the young mother of young children, suffered infinite hardships on your account. One can only think that all your sufferings were the work of time, to whose will all the worlds and their rulers are subject, even as the bank of clouds is at the mercy of the wind. How else could calamity show its head where Dharmaputra was King and where were present Vṛkodara armed with the mace, and Arjuna, the bowman, with the Gāṇḍīva for bow, and they had Krishna for their friend and well-wisher ? No one

knows, O King, what He has it in His mind to do ; strive as they might to know that, even the seers are baffled. Therefore, O noble scion of the Bharatas, remembering that everything is in the hands of Providence, you should fulfil the will of Heaven, and as their rightful lord protect your helpless people (9-17).

‘This is assuredly the exalted Lord Narayana Himself, the All-Highest, the First Cause, Who dwells among the Vṛṣṇis unknown, keeping the world bemused by His Māyā. Only the God Siva, the celestial sage Nārada and the blessed Kapila know the greatness, which is the most profound of mysteries, of Him Whom you look upon as your beloved cousin, as the friend who is ever zealous to please you, and the disinterested benefactor, whom you made your adviser, envoy and charioteer because of the loving trust you reposed in Him. Whatever He is called upon to do, it makes no difference to Him, Who is the soul in all beings, Who is impartial in His attitude towards everybody, Who is without a second, and totally free from egotism, and is absolutely flawless. And yet, O King, look at His graciousness towards those who are wholly devoted to Him ; seeing that I am about to depart this life, Krishna has deigned to show Himself to me in person. May He, by meditating on Whom with love in his heart and pronouncing His name as he relinquishes his body, the yogi is rid of the consequences of action prompted by loves and hates ; May He, the God of gods, the exalted Lord with the four arms, Who is the supreme object of contemplation, be pleased to tarry here, the lovely lotus face beaming with the gracious smile and the violet eyes, till I discard this vesture of flesh !’ (18-24).

The Sūta said : Yudhishtira then questioned him, as he lay on his bed of arrows, about different *dharma*s, as the sages listened. And he, who knew the truth, explained, each separately, illustrating them with various stories and legends of the past, the *dharma*s that are common to all men, those that are peculiar to the different *varṇas* and *āśramas*, in their two-fold aspect as applying to two different types of men—men who are inclined to detachment, and men who are influenced

by desires—as well as the *dharma*s governing the making of gifts, those that bear on kingship and statecraft, and those that pave the way to release from birth and death ; and lastly, those that should govern the conduct of women, and those that are calculated to induce devotion to the Lord. He expounded them first compendiously and then in full. He also dilated on the four chief ends of life and the means of attaining them (25-28).

As he thus went on speaking at length on the different *dharma*s, the part of the year in which the sun enters the northern half of the zodiac, came round ; that part of the year preferred by the yogi who has it in his power to determine when he should lay down his life. Then he, the leader in battle of a thousand armed charioteers,¹ ceased speaking ; and without closing his eyes, fixed his mind, which had renounced all attachments, on the Primordial Lord Krishna, Who was seated before him, four-armed and resplendent in His yellow silks. All his sins destroyed by that cleansing concentration, all the pain from his many wounds exorcised by the kindly look He bent on him, his mind totally freed from the distractions caused by the multifarious activities of the senses, He praised Janārdana in the act of discarding the body (29-31).

Bhīshma said : ' I have, by these various means², brought my mind, freed from all attachments,³ to dwell on the exalted Lord, the Chief of the Sātvatas, than Whom there is nothing greater ; Who is established in the bliss of the Self, but diverts Himself ever and anon with His *Yoga-Māyā*, from whom then flows the stream of life. May my heart know loving devotion, unmarred by self-interest, to Vijaya's comrade, Who has taken that lovely form which is the one thing that all the three worlds long to see, that body which is dark-blue like the *tamāla* tree, and clad in rich raiment of a brilliant yellow, like the rays of the morning sun, with the lotus face framed in the mass of curls. May my

¹ (With *v. r.*) ' Then he ceased speaking those words which had a thousand meanings. ' ² By the practice of different *Dharma*s.

³ With (*v. r.*) this part of the sentence would mean ' I have brought my mind, which can never tire of it. '

mind cleave to the vision of Krishna as He appeared on the field of battle, with the beads of perspiration, which His fluttering curls, grey with the dust of horses' hooves, scattered, while His skin was pierced by my sharp arrows beneath the glittering armour. May my heart find all delight in contemplating the Friend of Pārtha, as He, stopping the chariot between the contending armies, as His companion bade, waited, and with a mere look cut off the lives of the foe. May it be given to me to love the feet of the Supreme Lord Who imparted the knowledge of the Self and dispelled the wrong notions entertained by him (Arjuna) who, as he looked from a distance at those who were in the van of the enemy forces, felt averse to killing his own folk, thinking it sin. May He, Who broke His own vow, exalting mine by fulfilling it, and jumped down from His seat on the chariot and, arming Himself with the chariot-wheel, came straight for me, like the lion for the elephant, resolved to kill, as the earth shook under His tread, unmindful of His upper garment fallen on the way, and rebuffing the attempt to hold Him, while I continued to assail Him with my sharp arrows and cut down His coat of mail and bathed His body in blood—may that Lord Mukunda be my refuge. May my heart be flooded with love, as I depart this life, for the exalted Lord Who lavished on Vijaya's chariot all the love and care that a man gives to his own family, and Who, with whip in one hand and the horses' reins gathered in the other, presented a glorious sight that never palled—a sight which sufficed, for those who had seen it but once on the battle-field before they fell, to translate them into His likeness. Why, did not the very Gopa women get thus transformed, they who were so intoxicated with the exaltation of finding favour in the eyes of Him Who set Himself to charm them with His lovely gait and amorous ways, His gay laughter and loving look, that they began imitating all His actions in total self-forgetfulness? He, the Soul of the universe, Who was the cynosure of all eyes in the great assembly of holy sages and mighty Kings who had gathered at Yudhishtira's Rājasūya sacrifice, where He received the chief honours—He in His own person is here to rejoice My eyes.

And now, freed from the delusion of multiplicity, I have attained Him who knows no birth and Who is established as the Ruler in the hearts of all creatures, whom He has made, and so seems different in each, like the one sun seen differently by different eyes' (32-42).

The Sūta said: Thus uniting his Self, along with the faculties of mind, speech and vision, with the exalted Lord Krishna, the Paramātmā, he departed this life, his breath being absorbed within. Seeing that the soul of Bhīshma had merged in the infinite, unconditioned Brahma, they were all silent like the birds when the day is done. Then there was heard the sound of kettle-drums played by gods and men. The good Kings spoke his praises, and showers of flowers fell from the sky (43-45).

Yudhishtira, having got the funeral rites done for him who had departed this life, remained plunged in grief for some time, O scion of the Bhṛgu. The sages, whose very heart was Krishna, returned to their hermitages, gladly praising Him by reciting His secret names. And Yudhishtira returned to Gajāhvaya, accompanied by Krishna, and consoled his uncle and the grief-stricken Gāndhārī. And the all-powerful King ruled the kingdom of his fathers in all righteousness, with the permission of his uncle and the approval of Vāsudeva (46-49).

CHAPTER X

THE KURU WOMEN PROCLAIM KRISHNA'S DIVINITY

Saunaka asked: 'Having slain those who had coveted his heritage and waged war against him, and regained the enjoyment of all blessings by recovering his kingdom, how did Yudhishtira, foremost of those who uphold Dharma, proceed to rule the realm with his brothers, and what did he do?' (1).

The Sūta answered: Having caused the Kuru race, burnt by the forest fire of fratricidal war, to sprout and grow again, and helped Yudhishtira to regain his throne, the Supreme Lord Hari, Who causes all creation

to prosper, felt greatly pleased. And Yudhishtira, listening to the teachings of Bhīshma and Achyuta, came to understand the truth about the world¹ and was freed from error. And putting his trust in the Invincible Lord, He ruled the ocean-girdled earth with the assistance of his brothers, as Indra rules in heaven. The god of rain sent plentiful showers; the earth yielded all that the heart could desire; the happy cows, their great udders bulging, drenched the cowpens with their milk; the rivers, seas, mountains, trees, herbage and the seasonal crops yielded in unfailing plenty in due season. When Ajātaśatru was King nowhere did any creature suffer from bodily or mental ailments or other afflictions caused by the gods, the elements or the body (2-6).

Having stayed at Hastināpura for some months for the solace of His friends, and for making His sister happy, the Lord took leave of the King, and being allowed to depart, embraced him and prostrated Himself before him; and Himself receiving the embraces and obeisances of others, got into his chariot. Subhadrā, Droupadī, Kuntī, the daughter of Virāta (Uttarā), Gāndhārī and Dhṛtarāshtra, Yuyutsu and Gautama (Kṛpa), the twins, Vṛkodara and Dhaumya, as well as other women including Satyawati, could not bear to part with Him Who wields the Sārṅga; the very thought made them faint. How then could the sons of Prthā, who had become passionately attached to Krishna from constantly seeing Him, touching Him, talking to Him, sitting with Him, sharing bed and board with Him, bear to be separated from Him, when the intelligent man, whose association with the good has weaned him from evil attachments, finds it impossible to forgo their company, if he has heard them even once sing His (Krishna's) praises? Knit by the bonds of affection, their hearts streaming after Him, they looked at Him with unwinking eyes even while they busied themselves with the concerns of the moment (7-13).

When Devaki's son was leaving the house, His female relatives held in check the tears that welled up

¹ That the world was a creature of the Lord and not independent, and that no man was a free agent.

from the intensity of their attachment, lest evil should befall Him. The *mṛdanga*, the conch-shell and the big drum, the *vīṇa*, the *pañava*, the trumpet and the cymbals, the little drum, the bell and other musical instruments sounded, along with the kettle-drum. The Kuru women, who had ascended to the top of their lofty terraces, eager to see Him, showered Krishna with flowers, looking at Him with loving, bashful smiles. Arjuna, who was dear to the Lord, held over Him, Whom he loved above all things, the white umbrella with the gem-set handle, festooned with ropes of pearl; while Uddhava and Sātyaki waved the two splendid fly-whisks. Showered with flowers on the way, the Lord of the Madhus dazzled all eyes. Everywhere were heard the true blessings¹ pronounced by the Brahmanas, which were applicable to Him Who had assumed a body, though inappropriate in the case of the unconditioned Absolute (14-19).

The women of the city of the Kuru King, whose hearts were given to the illustrious Lord, spoke of Him among themselves in words that delighted all who heard them. 'This, you should know, is none other than the Primordial Lord Who alone existed in His essential, undifferentiated Self before the *guṇas* were disturbed, and likewise when the universe was in dissolution and the *jīvas* merged in *Īśvara*, their powers, the product of the *guṇas*, being quiescent. And He Himself activates, by His own power (of time), *Prakṛti*, which deludes the *jīvas*, who are His own *aśas*, and furthers her design to start creation again² so as to invest with name and form the *jīva* who in truth knows neither; and in this behalf He gives out the Vedas. It is He, my dear, Whose feet³ are seen in this world by the men of wisdom, who have established control over the breath and mastery over the senses, with the pure mind which longs for devotion; and He alone can purify the mind. It is He Himself, my dear, Whose immaculate glories are extolled in the Vedas, and in the esoteric scriptures⁴

¹ They would be appropriate to the Lord incarnate as man but not to the Brahma, the unconditioned absolute. ² Creation is a stream, without beginning or end. ³ (*alt.*) 'Whose essential Self is',

⁴ The Nārada Pāñcharātra or the Upanishads.

by those who expound secret doctrines, and who speak of Him as the Supreme Lord Who diverts Himself, creating, sustaining and destroying the universe, while He Himself remains aloof and unspotted by it. Whenever Kings, whose minds are swamped by ignorance, pamper themselves by unrighteousness, He assumes, in *yuga* after *yuga*, the most diverse bodies, which are all compact of pure *sattva*, in order to preserve the world; and then He displays His omnipotence, His fidelity to His word, His authority as the teacher of the eternal truth, His love for His devotees, and His capacity for marvellous exploits. Blessed indeed is the House of Yadu which the All-Highest, the Consort of the Goddess Sṛī has honoured by His birth, and holy beyond compare is Mathurā city, which He exalts by pacing its streets. Ah! how marvellous that Dvārakā should eclipse the fame of heaven and bring sanctity and renown to the earth, for it is given to its inhabitants to see every day their Master, Who out of His abounding grace lets His smiling glance rest on them (20-27).

‘Without a doubt, my dear, His spouses should have worshipped Him by observing vows, taking baths in holy waters, making oblations in the fire and performing other rites, to be able to drink constantly the nectar of His lips, yearning for which the women of Vraja fainted. Those women, the mothers of Pradyumna, of Sāmba, Amba and others, who were won by Him with the bride-price of valour, putting down by main force men of overweening pride like the King of Chedi and others, as well as those others who were annexed by Him after slaying Narakāsura, have redeemed womanhood itself from the reproach of subservience and impurity, since their spouse, the Lord of the lotus eyes, never stirs from their homes, but is always there, delighting them with His heart-warming words¹’ (28-30).

Expressing His thanks to the women of the city for those words by His smiling glance, Hari proceeded on His way. Ajātaśatru sent an army complete with the four divisions to accompany the Slayer of Madhu for His protection, his love making him suspicious of the

¹ (alt.) ‘With his acts, such as getting the Pārijāta tree for them’,

designs of others. Sending back the Kauravas (the sons of Pāndu), who dearly loved Him and had come a long way, reluctant to part with Him, Sourī journeyed to His city with His favourite companions. Traversing the Kuru-Jāngala, Pāṇchāla, and Sūrasena regions, the countries on the banks of the Yamunā, Brahmāvarta, Kurukshetra, the Matsya country and the lands on the banks of the Sarasvati, the waterless deserts and the regions where water was scanty, the Lord reached the Ānarta countryside beyond the Souveera and Ābhīra regions, O son of the Bhṛgu, with mounts that showed some fatigue. Greeted with offerings on the way by the people of the countries through which He passed, Hari halted in the afternoon on His western march, and then the sun set in the western sea¹ (31-36).

CHAPTER XI

KRISHNA RETURNS TO DVĀRAKĀ

The Sūta said: On reaching His own flourishing countryside, the Ānarta region, He sounded His great conch as if to dispel His people's dejection. That conch, with its white belly, held by the exalted Lord in His hands cupped like the lotus and blown, was tinted red with the hue of His coral lips, and shone like a swan calling aloud from a bed of red lotus. On hearing that great booming, which put fear into the heart of that which all the worlds dread, His subjects, who longed for a sight of their lord, came out to receive Him. Offering Him their tributes of affection, as one waves the lighted lamp before the sun, they, their faces beaming with joy, addressed Him, the Friend and Protector of the universe, Who delights in the Self, and finds it wholly sufficient. They spoke to Him, like children to their father, in a voice choked with emotion: 'We adore your lotus feet, O Lord, to which Brahmā, his sons, the gods and Indra make their obeisance, and which are the supreme refuge of those who long for the highest felicity in this

¹ (alt.) 'When it was evening, He got off his chariot, went to the water-side and offered Sandhyā prayers' (S).

life, since time, which lords it over all others, is powerless against those who resort to them. Our welfare is your concern, O Protector of the universe, You are father and mother to us, friend and master. You are the Guru who redeems and the God, by worshipping Whom we have achieved our purpose in life. O joy, that we should have you for ruler and protector, and are thus able to see this form of yours, which is all loveliness, with the face lit up by the affectionate smile and the friendly glance, a sight which is rarely vouchsafed even to the gods. Whenever you, O Achyuta of the lotus eyes, went away from us to the Kuru or the Madhu country, wishing to see your friends, a second then seemed like a million years to us, your own folk, as it would be to eyes that were denied the light of the sun' (1-9).

Hearing these and like sentiments expressed by His subjects, He who loved His devotees shed His grace on them with the glance of His eye and entered His city, which was guarded by the Madhus, Bhojas, Dāsārhas, Kukuras, Andhakas and Vṛshnis, who were His peers in strength, as Bhogavati is guarded by the Nāgas. It was lovely with its lotus pools situate among orchards, flower-gardens and parks full of sacred trees and arbours that always carried the wealth of fruit and flower of all the seasons. It had put on a festive appearance, with festoons hung over the gateways of the city and the entrances of houses and over the thoroughfares. The many banners and flags with picturesque emblems, which streamed in the sun, intercepted the heat. Its main thoroughfares, carriage-ways, shopping quarters and street-crossings were well-swept, sprinkled with scented water and strewn with fruits, flowers, unbroken rice and tender sprouts. Every house had its door-front decorated with pots of curds, unbroken rice, fruits and sugar-cane, with full water-pots, votive offerings, lights and incense (10-15).

Hearing that the darling of their hearts was come, the great-hearted Vasudeva, Akrūra and Ugrasena, Rama of the marvellous prowess, Pradyumna, Chāru-deshṇa and Sāmba, son of Jāmbavati,—all jumped up for joy, leaving bed, seat, or food. Excited by the pros-

pect of seeing the loved One, they went with glad hearts, mounted on chariots, to meet Him, the great elephant going before; and Brahmanas with auspicious things in their hands accompanied them, as conch-shell and trumpet sounded and the chanting of Vedic *mantras* filled the air. And with them went hundreds of courtesans riding in vehicles, eager to see Him, their cheeks lit up by their shining ear-pendants. Actors, dancers, singers, chroniclers, bards and heralds sang the marvellous doings of the illustrious Lord (16-20).

And the Lord received and honoured His relations, the citizens and His dependants in the appropriate way; bowing His head and offering His salutations, embracing, pressing the hands, or vouchsafing a smile, He put them all at their ease and gratified one and all, including the lowliest, by granting them their heart's desire. And He Himself received the blessings of family elders, Brahmanas and old men who were all accompanied by their wives, and as the minstrels and others invoked Heaven's blessings, He made His entry into the city (21-23).

When Krishna was proceeding along the King's way, the housewives of Dvārakā climbed up to the top of their lofty mansions to feast their eyes on Him, O Brahman. For, though the residents of Dvārakā saw Achyuta every day, their eyes could never feel satiety as they feasted on Him, Whose body was the home of beauty, Whose bosom was the abode of the Goddess of Plenty, Whose face was the chalice from which all eyes drank, Whose arms were the refuge of the Guardians of the worlds, Whose lotus feet were the sanctuary of His devotees. Clad in yellow silks, honoured with the white umbrella and the fly-whisks, showered with masses of flowers on the way, He, with His garland of wild flowers, shone like a cloud, with the sun, the moon and the stars shining, with a rainbow in the sky, and lightning playing upon it, all at once. On entering His parents' home, His mothers¹ embraced Him, and with bowed head He made his reverence to all the seven of them, Devaki and the rest. Placing their son on their laps, they drenched him with their tears, their

¹ Devaki and her six sisters, her co-wives.

hearts in a tumult of gladness, their breasts streaming with the milk of love (24-29).

Then He entered His own home, which was unsurpassed in its excellence and filled with all that the heart could desire ; there were situated the apartments of His sixteen thousand spouses. Seeing from afar their lord who had come back after a sojourn abroad, the hearts of His wives were filled with elation. They, who were observing strict vows, jumped up from their seats, setting aside their vows and their pensive reveries¹ of Him, while their bashfulness showed in their eyes and their faces. The depth of their emotions could not be judged from their faces, as they embraced their Lord first in their minds, then with their eyes, and lastly in the person of their children. But, though in their bashfulness they tried to suppress their tears, their feelings were too much for them, and they could not keep back a trickle, O first of the Bhṛgus (30-32).

Though He was now back with them in the privacy of their own homes, they discovered a new delight every moment in the contemplation of His feet. How could they bear to tear themselves away from those feet which the Goddess Śrī, fickle though she is, never leaves ? Having kindled strife, as the wind does fire, among the Kings, who were born to burden the earth and who had extended their power and influence by the possession of great armies, and thus brought about their mutual destruction without Himself taking arms, He remained aloof and unconcerned. The exalted Lord, Who was incarnate by His own power of Māyā for this purpose, diverted Himself, like any common mortal, in the company of damsels who were gems of their sex. He, Whose self-control could not be overthrown by the arts even of those lovely women, who had shamed Love himself into throwing away his bow in confusion by the display of that pure and captivating laughter and bashful look that gave a discreet hint of the depth of their feelings ; even He, Who knows no attachment, is regarded by the common run of men, who are foolish and who judge others by themselves, as a mere man and the slave

¹ (Lit.) 'They rose from their seats and *antahkaraṇas* (inner organs).'

of His desires, because He busies himself with affairs. Herein lies the supremacy of the Supreme Lord, that though He is present in Prakṛti,¹ He is not affected by its qualities, even as the intellect, though dependent on the *Ātman*, does not share the qualities that are inherent in the *Ātman*² (33-38).

Even His wives, being ignorant women, did not realize the true greatness of their lord, and they thought of Him, much as the egoistic impulses think of the *jīva*, as one who was in their power and always seeking them out in privacy (39).

CHAPTER XII

THE REIGN OF DHARMAPUTRA

Saunaka said : 'The child in Uttarā's womb, which was slain by the Brahmāstra of tremendous power launched by Aśvatthāmā, was restored to life by the Lord. We should be glad to hear, if you deem it proper, of the birth and exploits of that great and wise man to whom Suka brought enlightenment, how his death came about, and what worlds he attained. We are all attention.' (1-3).

The Sūta said : Yudhishtira, having shed all desires by worshipping the lotus feet of Krishna, made his subjects happy by his paternal rule. What pleasure could he, who treasured Mukunda in his heart, have got out of the felicity that was his, O Brahmanas, though the gods themselves might have coveted it—the riches he had, the sacrifices he had offered, the worlds of bliss won by him, his queen, his brothers, his suzerainty over the earth and sovereign power over Jambū-dvīpa, and his fame, which had reached heaven—any more than a hungry man might find gratification in anything other than food? (4-6).

The valiant Parikshit, while still in the womb of his mother, had felt the scorching fire of the celestial weapon ; and then he saw, close by him, O scion of the Bhṛgu, a certain person, of the size of a thumb,

¹ 'Present in the gods'. ² For *alts.* see Notes.

immaculate in His purity and of an extraordinary beauty, and wearing a crown of burnished gold. Wondering 'Who could this be?' he looked narrowly at Him, the Immutable Lord Who was dark-blue in complexion and clad in raiment that blazed like lightning, Who had four long and beautiful arms and wore gleaming gold ear-pendants, and Who, with His eyes of a fiery red, circled swiftly round him, armed with the mace which He constantly whirled like a fire-brand, quenching the fire of the celestial weapon with it, as the sun dispels the mist. The moment He had destroyed it, the exalted Lord Hari, Whose appearance baffles description, and Who is the sovereign protector of Dharma¹, disappeared before the very eyes of the ten-month-old child (7-11).

Then, at an auspicious hour which, from the favourable position of all the planets, augured a bright future, was born the child who was to continue the line of Pāṇdu and who in his prowess seemed to be Pāṇdu himself reborn. The glad King had the *jātakarma* sacrament performed for the child by Dhaumya, Kṛpa and other Brahmanas, who first pronounced blessings over him. The King, who knew the proper time for making gifts, gave away to Brahmanas on the auspicious occasion of the birth of a child and heir, gold, cows, land, villages and elephants and horses of the best breed as well as foodstuffs. The Brahmanas, greatly pleased, told the King, who waited on them in all humility, 'O Chief of the Pauravas, this child will be known to all the world by the name of Vishnurāta, since he was protected by the almighty Lord Vishnu to be a blessing to you by carrying on your line, when the pure Kuru race was in imminent danger of being destroyed by ineluctable fate. He will, without a doubt, achieve immense renown and be a great devotee of the Lord and a great man because of his many virtues' (12-17).

Yudhishtira asked them, 'Will he, O best of men, follow in the footsteps of his ancestors, those royal sages who were illustrious and high-souled men, winning the fame that earns the commendation of the good?' (18).

The Brahmanas answered, 'O son of Prthā, he

¹(v.r.) 'Who is supreme over Kings, Protectors of Dharma.'

will directly look after the protection of his subjects, like Ikshvāku of the line of Manu; and he will be a devoted lover of Brahmanas and of truth, like Rama, the son of Daśaratha. Like Sibi of the Uśīnara country he will be a great giver and the refuge of the stricken. Like the son of Dushyanta, he will spread the fame of his own clan and of all who offer sacrifices. He will be the best of bowmen, being in this regard the equal of the two Arjunas. He will be inviolable like fire and invincible like the sea; he will be as valiant as the lion and as much sought after as the Himālaya itself. In forbearance he will resemble the earth, and he will be as patient as parents are with their children. He will be the peer of the Grandsire in impartiality and of Giriśa in the readiness to shower his grace. In the support he accords to all beings, he will resemble the God (Vishnu), Who is the Spouse of Ramā. In the greatness that results from the possession of all auspicious qualities, he will be the peer of Krishna. He will be generous like Rantideva and righteous like Yayāti. He will be the equal of Bali in courage and of Prahlaḍa in the staunchness of his devotion to Krishna. He will offer many a horse-sacrifice and wait diligently on the old. He will be the parent of royal sages and the chastiser of those who stray from the right path. He will put down Kali in the interests of the world and of Dharma. On hearing that he is to die at the hands of Takshaka, despatched by the Brahmana's son, he will renounce all attachments and take refuge in the feet of Hari. Then, having learnt by due inquiry, from the sage, the son of Vyāsa, the truth about the Self, he will discard the body on the bank of the Gangā and straightway attain the sanctuary where no fear threatens.' The Brahmanas skilled in the reading of horoscopes, having thus acquainted the King, went home amply rewarded (19-29).

Because that capable man, constantly meditating on the figure he had seen while yet in the womb, scanned the faces of all men he met, he became known to fame as Parikshit. The prince grew apace, fostered with loving care by his grandparents, as the moon fills out in the bright fortnight with its digits. The King

Yudhishtira wished to expiate for the suffering inflicted on his kinsmen, by offering the horse-sacrifice ; but as he had no wealth at his disposal other than what was collected as taxes and fines, he was wondering what to do. His brothers saw what was troubling his mind. On the suggestion of Achyuta they fetched the huge quantity of wealth and goods that had been left behind in the North.¹ With the materials thus secured, Yudhishtira, the son of Dharma, who dreaded sin, worshipped Hari by offering three horse sacrifices. Invited by the King, the exalted Lord came and helped him to offer the sacrifice with the aid of Brahmanas, and then stayed on for some months to give pleasure to His friends. Then taking leave of the King, Draupadi and their relations, He left for Dvārakā, accompanied by Arjuna and the Yādavas (30-36).

CHAPTER XIII

DHṚTARĀSHTRA RETIRES TO THE FOREST

The Sūta said : Vidura having in the course of his pilgrimage met Maitreya and learnt from him the goal to be sought, and thus obtained all the knowledge that he wanted, went on to Hastināpura. When, on putting a few questions to the sage Kaushārava and hearing his replies, Kshattā's heart was filled with exclusive and disinterested devotion to Govinda, he had stopped pursuing his enquiries (1-2).

Seeing that he, their relative and friend, was come back, Dharmaputra and his brothers, Dhṛtarāshtra, Yuyutsu, the Sūta (Sanjaya), Sāradvata, Prthā, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadra, Uttarā and Kṛpī, the kinsmen of Pāndu and their wives and sons, as well as other women, went forth joyously to receive him, as the organs revive when consciousness returns. Greeting him with embraces and prostrations as was fitting, they, overwhelmed by the joy of meeting him after a long parting, shed tears of love. When he had taken his seat, the King entertained him hospitably. Having

¹ The Brahmanas, who had officiated at Marutta's sacrifice, had left behind gold vessels and other valuables used therein.

eaten and rested, he was sitting at ease, when the King questioned him in their hearing, his head bowed in all reverence. Yudhishtira said : 'Do you remember how we grew under the shelter of your wings, saved along with our mother from a host of perils, poison, fire and the like ? How did you maintain yourself as you made the entire round of the globe, and what were the principal shrines and places of pilgrimage you visited ? Devotees of the Lord like you, honoured sir, are not only holy themselves ; they sanctify the sacred waters, since the Wielder of the Mace is seated in their hearts. Are our well-wishers and relations, who look upon Krishna as their God, happy and well in their city ? Did you, O father, by any chance, see or hear of them ?' (3-11).

Asked thus by Dharmarāja, he described methodically all that he had seen and heard, except the extermination of the Yādava race. Being so tender-hearted that he could not bear to see them grieve, he did not convey to them tidings of the unbearable calamities, which had occurred inevitably in the course of nature. Desirous of promoting the good of his elder brother, he continued to live there, honoured by them like a god himself, happy and making them happy. He was none other than Yama, who was born as a Sūdra under a curse which was in force for a hundred years, during which period Aryamā functioned as the chastiser of sinners. Yudhishtira, restored to his throne, was happy, having seen the grandson who was to continue his line. He enjoyed his prosperity in the company of his brothers, who shone like the Guardians of the worlds (12-16).

As they were thus engrossed in the concerns of the domestic life and heedless of their abiding interests, time, whose remorseless march none may check, stole upon them. Vidura, who saw this, said to Dhṛtarāshtra, 'Let us get away quick, O King, you should see the menace that lours over us. Our time is come, my lord, that all-powerful destroyer whom there is no resisting. The man who falls into its grip instantly forfeits that life which is dearer than all things else, not to speak of wealth and the like. Gone are your parents, brothers, friends and sons. Your youthful days are long past. Your body is worn out with age. You live in your

enemy's home in humble dependence. Ah ! how potent must be life's hold over creatures, to make you lap up like a dog the handful of food that Bhīma throws you ! What good is that life which you must sustain on whatever your enemies care to give you—those men whom you sought to destroy by fire and poison, whose womenfolk you subjected to disgrace, whose land and wealth you grabbed ? Though you cling desperately to life in spite of its wretchedness, and will not willingly let the body die, that body, worn out by age like old clothes, is bound to perish. He is the man of wisdom, who, when he finds that his body no longer serves to promote his interest (by subserving Dharma or bringing him fame), develops aversion to the worldly life, and discards the body, freeing himself from all attachments, and going away from home to a place where no one knows him. He is the best of men who, having developed a distaste for the worldly life, either as the result of his own reflection or of another's teaching, resolutely controls his mind, renounces his home and goes away, enshrining Hari in his heart. Therefore you had better go north, without letting your kin know where you have gone. For the times that are coming will be largely detrimental to the flourishing of human virtues' (17-27).

The blind King, the descendant of Ajāmīdha, thus enlightened by his younger brother Vidura, and shown the way to freedom, sundered the ties of affection, which are so hard to snap, and went away from home. The faithful and virtuous daughter of Subala followed her departing husband to the Himālaya, in which those who have abjured all violence find delight, as brave men do in a fierce battle (28-29).

Ajātaśatru, having offered his *sandhyā* prayers and poured oblations into the fire, and honoured Brahmanas with gifts of sesamum seed, cows, land and gold, entered their apartments to make his obeisance to his elders ; but neither his uncles nor the daughter of Subala were to be seen. With fear clutching at his heart, he asked Sanjaya, who was sitting there, 'O son of Gavalgaṇa, where are my father (uncle) who is old and blind, and my mother (aunt) who grieves for her slain sons ? And

where has he gone—our uncle and well-wisher? Could he, who has lost his sons, have fallen into the Gangā with his wife in his grief, suspecting stupid me of evil designs? Where have our uncles gone—those who protected us, children and their close kinsmen, from every kind of peril, when our father Pāndu was dead? (28-33).

The Sūta said: The Sūta (Sanjaya), not seeing his master, was so distressed, because of the sympathy and anxious affection he had for him, that at the very thought of separation from him he felt weak and forlorn, and for a moment he said no word in reply. Then wiping his tears and controlling his feelings with an effort, he answered Ajātaśatru, as his mind dwelt on the feet of his master. Sanjaya said: 'I did not know of the intentions of your uncles or of Gāndhārī, O mighty lord, O Delight of your race. I have been taken in by those great souls' (34-36).

The Sūta went on: A little while later, the blessed sage Nārada came there with Tumburu. He advanced with his brothers to receive him, and making his obeisance straightway spoke, as if he had offered the customary honours¹. Yudhistira said: 'I do not know where my uncles have gone. Where could they have gone, venerable sage? And my mother, distraught with grief for her children slain, where could she have gone? The blessed one has come like a helmsman in the boundless ocean; he can show me the farther shore' (37-38).

The blessed Nārada told him, 'You must not grieve for anybody, O King; for the world is in the hands of Providence. It is the Supreme Lord, to Whom the worlds and their masters pay tribute, that brings creatures together, and it is He that separates them. As oxen with nose-cords, tethered to the long rope that holds them by shorter cords, do their master's work, so are all men constrained to do the duties of their station in life according to the injunctions of the Vedas, thus paying tribute to Him, the Supreme Controller. The meeting and the parting of men happen as the Disposer of their destinies wills, even as playthings are assembled and scattered by the player. Whether you

¹ In his haste, he forgot this duty.

look upon all creatures as eternal, or as transient, or as neither the one thing nor the other, or as both, there is no just cause for grief; it is delusion caused by ignorance that makes one grieve. Therefore, my dear, stop vexing yourself with vain regrets born of ignorance, thinking, "Alas, how will they live without me, unfriended and miserable!" This body, composed of the five elements, is at the mercy of time, past *karma* and the three *guṇas*. How can it save others any more than the man who is himself caught in the jaw of a python can save another? Life feeds on life,¹ the creatures that have hands, on those that have none, quadrupeds, on things that are stationary, the strong, on the weak. The universe is none other than the Supreme Lord, One and Self-luminous, O King, the essential Self in all souls, and it is He Who, you should realize, appears within and without, taking myriad forms by His own power of *Māyā*. And it is the Lord Himself, the Creator of all creatures, Who is now incarnate in this world, great King, as the Destroyer, for the annihilation of the enemies of the gods. The work of the gods has been done. He is waiting to wind up what little yet remains. So long as the Lord remains on earth, you should, too. Dhṛtarāshtra has gone with his brother and his wife Gāndhārī to the hermitage of the sages located to the south of the Himalaya at the place where the celestial stream divides into seven branches, to flow along seven channels, for the pleasure of the seven sages, and which is therefore known as *Sapta-srotas*. Bathing there regularly at stated times, offering oblations in the fire, according to the rules, and subsisting on water, he lives with his mind at peace, all debilitating desires shed. Established in the right posture, with control over the breath, his senses withdrawn from the world without, his mind purified of the taint of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* by concentration on Hari, (detached from the body) and united with the intellect, the latter then merged in the *jīva* and the *jīva* in the Brahma, the Support, as the space within the pot is merged in the space without; the residual im-

¹ This was said to remind Yudhishtira that as all creatures manage to exist somehow or other he need not be anxious about his uncle.

pressions left by the operations of the *gunas* of Māyā destroyed; the senses and the mind stilled, and the intake of all aliment discontinued—in this state he remains, immovable as a post. Do not stand in the way of him who has renounced all activity. On the fifth day from this, O King, he will discard the body, which will be forthwith reduced to ashes. When the body of her lord is being burnt by the fires¹ along with the hut in which they lived, his good wife, who will be outside at the time, will follow him by throwing herself into the fire. Seeing that miraculous happening, Vidura will be filled with joy and grief at once. And he will then go away on a pilgrimage, O Delight of the Kurus.' Having said this, Nārada ascended to heaven along with Tumburu. And Yudhishtira, treasuring his words in his heart, cast away grief (50-59).

CHAPTER XIV

YUDHISHTIRA SEES OMINOUS PORTENTS

The Sūta said: It was some months since Arjuna had gone to Dvārakā to see his relations and to know what Krishna, Whose fame purifies the hearer, was doing and thinking. And yet he had not come back. The chief of the Kurus saw many dread omens. He noted, too, the disquieting trend of the times, the character of the very seasons being reversed; the wicked means by which men, who were dominated by anger, covetousness and untruth, made their living; the predominant part deception played in human affairs and the vitiation of friendship by guile; and the perpetual dissensions among parents and children, friends, brothers and married couples. Noting the omens, portending terrible calamities, and the natural inclination of all men to covetousness and other vices, and the fact that the times seemed propitious to such developments, the King spoke thus to his brother Bhīma (1-5).

Yudhishtira said, 'Arjuna was sent to Dvārakā to see our relations and to know of the doings of Krishna, Whose

¹ The fire generated by yoga as well as the three domestic fires,

praises sanctify. Seven months have gone by, Bhīmasena, and your brother does not return, I cannot guess why. Can it be that that time has come which the celestial sage foretold, when he said that then the Lord would wish to discard that body which was His playground—the Lord to Whose grace we are beholden for our prosperity and our kingdom, for the protection of our spouses and our lives, for the preservation of our family and children, for the victories we obtained over our rivals, and the worlds of bliss we have won. Look at these frightful portents that appear on the earth, in the sky and in our bodies, O tiger among men, foreboding imminent peril that will confound the understanding. My thigh, eye and arm are troubled by constant tremors, my dear, and my heart quakes. These indicate imminent misfortune. The jackal with its fiery mouth howls at the rising sun ; and the dog bays at me unafraid, my child. Auspicious animals keep me to the left when they move ; the others to the right. I find, O tiger among men, my mounts shedding tears. This pigeon is the harbinger of death. This owl and its adversary¹ make my heart tremble, hooting disagreeably and unsleepingly at each other as if they wished to empty the world. The four quarters are smoky, enveloping the earth like the twigs placed over the sacred fire. The earth rocks, with the mountains. The thunderbolt falls from a cloudless sky with a tremendous clatter, my child. There are violent winds blowing and darkening the earth with a pall of dust. The clouds rain blood. Wherever one turns one sees nothing but ghastly sights. Look at the wan, lack-lustre sun and the planets in combat in the sky. Earth and heaven seem to be ablaze, crowded with hosts of evil spirits. The streams that flow west and those that flow east, and the lakes, are turbid, and so are the minds of men. The fire does not burn bright when oblations of ghee are made in it. One wonders what the times have in store for us. Calves do not drink at the udder, nor do their mothers yield milk. The cows weep, with streaming faces. The bulls in the cow-pens are not happy. The images of the gods seem to weep, they sweat, spring up and fall

¹ (*alt.*) 'this crow'.

down. The countryside, villages, towns, gardens, mines and hermitages look decayed and cheerless. Who knows what ills they forebode for us? From these frightful signs, I feel certain that the earth no longer bears the footprints of the exalted Lord, Whose feet were invested with a glory that no mortal could match, and is shorn of her splendour' (6-21).

As the King was thus sombrely pondering on the evils of which he had a premonition, Arjuna returned from the city of the Yadus, O Brahman. The King looked with a sinking heart at the brother who had fallen at his feet, distressed as he had never seen him before, his head hanging down, as the tears fell from the lotus eyes. He questioned him, from whose face the light had departed, in the company of his friends and well-wishers, as the words of Narada recurred to his mind (22-24).

Yudhishtira asked him, 'Are our relations living in the city of Anarta, the Madhus, Bhojas, Dāsārhas, Arhas, Sātvatas, Andhakas and Vṛshṇis, happy and well? Is all well with our dear grandfather Sūra? Are our uncle, Ānakadundubhi, and his brothers, in the enjoyment of good health? Are the seven sisters, Devakī, and the rest, his spouses and our aunts, happy with their sons and daughters-in-law? I hope King Ahuka, father of a wicked son, is alive, as also his brother; and that Hṛdika and his son, and Akrūra, Jayanta, Gada and Sārana are all well, and so too are Satrujit and others. Does the exalted Lord Rama, the great chief of the Sātvatas, continue to enjoy all felicity? I hope Pradyumna, foremost of the great Vṛshṇi charioteers, the noble Aniruddha, irresistible in the impetuosity of his onset, Sushena, Chārudeshṇa, Sāmba, the son of Jāmbavati, and other notable sons of Krishna, such as Rishabha, and their sons, are all well; likewise the followers of Sri Krishna, Srutadeva and Uddhava, and also Sananda, Nārada and other prominent Sātvatas? I hope all those are well, who live under the protecting arm of Rama and Krishna. Do they, who have given us their affection, make solicitous enquiries of our welfare? And does the exalted Lord Govinda, Who is devoted to the Brahmana and Who loves His devotees, spend His

time happily, surrounded by His friends at Sudharmā in His city? Does the Primordial Lord, with Ananta for His companion, live in the midst of the ocean-like Yadu race, conferring all auspicious blessings on the world of men, securing their happiness and promoting their prosperity? It is because they live in His city, protected by His strong arm, that the Yadus revel in bliss, honoured by all the worlds like the attendants of the Almighty Lord Himself. And it is mainly by service to His feet that His sixteen thousand queens, Satyā and the rest, enjoy, as the result of a victory in battle, the sumptuous delights that were once the preserve of the spouse of the wielder of the thunderbolt. And depending on the prowess of His doughty arm, the Yadus live free from fear, and frequent as of right Sudharmā, the Council hall, which is fit for the gods and which was won by superior strength (25-38).

‘Are you well, my child? Your face has lost its brightness. Were you treated with scant courtesy or positive disrespect because you tarried there too long? Had you to bear unfriendly and insulting words? Or did you fail to reply to requests for favours, or having encouraged high hopes among those who wanted something of you, disappoint them? Did you, famed as one to whom men look with confidence for protection, abandon anyone who put himself into your hands, whether it was a Brahmana, a child, a cow, someone old or ailing, or a woman? Did you perchance take to yourself any woman with whom you should not have consorted, or one who, though not barred, was in a state of defilement? Or did you suffer defeat, on the way, at the hands of equals or of inferiors? Did you eat without feeding old men and children who should have been fed? Or did you do anything disgraceful, of which you should have felt ashamed? Or perhaps you brood sadly, “My life is empty, having lost for ever Him who was dearer to me than anything else in the world, my bosom friend and confidant”? Else it is difficult to account for the sorrow that oppresses you’ (39-44).

CHAPTER XV

ARJUNA REPORTS THE PASSING OF KRISHNA

The Sūta said : While his brother, the King, filled with fears by reason of his appearance, thus voiced his doubts and misgivings, Arjuna, the friend of Krishna, who had become thin with grief over His loss, and whose heart and face were parched and lustreless, could not bring himself to reply, his mind being wholly absorbed in thoughts of the All-powerful Lord. Then, restraining the tears of grief with great difficulty and wiping his eyes, he, whose courage was sapped by the irrepressible love that flooded his heart at the thought of his absent friend, spoke, recalling His loving companionship and the friendliness and spirit of helpfulness he had displayed in serving him as charioteer and in many other ways. He answered the King, his elder brother, in a voice choked by tears (1-4).

Arjuna said : ' I was taken in by Hari, in the guise of a relation, great King. I was deprived by Him of that tremendous power which was the wonder of the gods. I was taken in by Him, Whose absence even for a moment makes the world an unpleasing sight, like the body from which the breath has fled and which is forthwith declared dead. It was surely by His help that I humbled the pride of the infatuated kings who had assembled for the bride's choice at the home of Drupada, hit the fish with my arrow and won Krishna. It was under His eye that I gave over the Khāndava forest to the god of fire, swiftly putting to rout Indra and the host of the gods, and got the assembly hall, that marvel of art and wizardry, fashioned by Maya. And it was His presence that brought the kings, carrying gifts, from all quarters of the earth to the sacrifice you offered. It was by His puissance that your younger brother and my revered senior, who is possessed of the strength and prowess of ten thousand elephants, slew him (Jarāsandha) who had planted his foot on the heads of kings, in order to enable you to offer the (Rājasuya) sacrifice ; those kings, whom he had impounded, intending to sacrifice them to the Lord of the Pramathas (Bhairava), and who were thus

saved, brought you offerings of tribute. It was He, on whose feet had fallen the tears of your spouse, when the cheats in the assembly hall dragged her by the hair, unloosing those beautiful tresses that had been honoured with the lustral bath after the great sacrifice—it was He that brought widowhood to their women and made them stand with their dishevelled hair streaming about them. It was He who saved us from the dread peril that the enemy had contrived by using Durvāsas, who always takes his food at the head of a company of ten thousand disciples, by coming to the forest and eating the particle of green salad that was all that remained of our cooked food, whereupon the company of sages, who were immersed in water, felt as if the hunger of the three worlds had been appeased. It was thanks to His puissance that the exalted Lord, the Wielder of the trident, who was accompanied by the Mountain-King's Daughter, was filled with wonder seeing me fight Him, and gave me His own weapon, and so did others. And it was by His grace, again, that with this very body I was accorded by Mahendra the privilege of sitting with him on the great throne in his palace. The Lord, infinitely great, Whose grace infused with prowess these arms holding the Gāndīva, whose aid Indra and the gods had invoked for the slaying of their foes¹, what time I disported in heaven—it is even He Who has now deceived me, O Ājamīdhya. It was by virtue of having Him for my relation that I with my chariot singly crossed the boundless, unfathomable sea of the Kuru host, infested with formidable monsters that barred the way, and not only recovered the vast wealth (of cows) but took from their heads the gem-set headgear that proclaimed their greatness (5-14).

'Sitting in front of Me, He deprived by a mere look, my lord, the leaders of the chariot forces in the armies of Bhīshma, Karṇa, our preceptor (Droṇa) and Salya, which were adorned by the flower of the Kshatriya chivalry, of their lives and mental powers along with their strength and skill. Because I was under His sheltering arm, the celestial weapons of resistless power, that our preceptor (Droṇa), Bhīshma, Karṇa, the son of

¹ The Nivāta-kavachas.

Droṇa, the lord of Trigarta (Suśarmā), Salya, the ruler of the Sindhus, Bāhlika and others launched against me could not so much as touch me, even as the weapons of the Asura could not touch the devotee of the Lord, Who was incarnate as the Man-lion (15-16).

‘Fool that I was, I knew no better than to ask for His services as a charioteer of One Who is the Supreme Lord Himself, Whose lotus feet are the object of adoration of the wisest of men yearning for liberation, Who gives even Himself to His devotees. When my horses were tired and I had to take my stand on the ground, it was His almighty power that dazed the senses of my enemies, who were seated in their chariots, and prevented their attacking me. Mādhava’s jests, the more pleasing for the gracious and charming smile that accompanied them, and the sweetness that stirred one to the depths in the way He used to address me, “O Pārtha, O Arjuna, comrade mine, O Delight of the Kurus”, smite my heart as I recall them, O King. Whenever I taunted Him, saying, “What a truthful person you are, my friend!”—for we were inseparable, whether sleeping in the same bed, or sitting, eating, walking or even boasting!—He, who was supremely great, bore, in a manner worthy of His greatness, with my offensive crudity, as one would put up with the petulance of a friend, or a father with his child’s tantrums (17-19).

‘When I, bereaved of the Supreme Lord, the beloved Comrade and Well-wisher, my heart an aching void within me, was escorting the Lord’s spouses, I was waylaid by base cowherds and vanquished like a woman, my King. The bow and arrows were the same—and so were the chariot and horses, and I, the warrior—as those before whom the kings had abased themselves; and yet because the Supreme Lord was not behind them, all these were reduced to a nullity, like oblations made in ashes, or phantom wealth conjured up by a juggler, or seed sown in saline soil (20-21).

‘Of those friends of ours living in the city of our allies, about whose welfare you enquired, O King, hardly four or five were left after the rest had slaughtered each other with their fists in a drunken brawl as if they were strangers to each other, because the Brahmanas’

curse had deprived them of their sanity and their brains were addled by drink. I am pretty sure that this was the Lord's doing, since it is He Who is largely responsible for creatures' attacking each other, or their protecting each other. As among aquatic creatures the bigger eat up the smaller and the stronger kill the weaker, while those that are big and strong destroy each other, so the Omnipotent Lord destroyed others by the hands of the strong and mighty Yadus, and the Yadus by mutual slaughter, thus removing them who were a burden on the earth. As I recall all that Govinda ever said to me, so pertinent to the time, place and circumstances, and so effective in allaying the pangs of grief, my heart is overwhelmed' (22-27).

The Sūta said: 'As Arjuna's mind thus lingered with boundless love on the lotus feet of Krishna, it was freed from all taint and stilled in peace. When the intensity of devotion inspired by continuous contemplation of the feet of Vāsudeva had purged his mind of all impurities, the sagacious and capable man recovered the knowledge which the Lord had imparted to him on the battle-field and which had been overlaid and obscured by time, activity and ignorance. Having thus gained direct knowledge of the Brahma, which abolished nescience and brought emancipation from the sway of the *gunas*, with the consequent destruction of the subtle body and the possibility of recurrent births, the delusion of duality was ended for him, and with it all sorrow and suffering (28-31).

Hearing of the Lord's departure, and the extinction of the Yadu race, Yudhishtira decided with a serene mind on commencing his heavenward journey. And Prthā, too, on hearing from Dhananjaya of the destruction of the Yadus and the manner of disappearance of the Lord, fixed her mind on the Lord Adhokshaja, to Whom she gave her undivided devotion, and found cessation from life's travail¹ (32-33).

The Lord Who knows no birth discarded the body He had assumed for removing the burden of the earth, just as a man throws away, along with the thorn that

¹ It might mean that she died or attained release in this life itself (*jīvan-mukti*).

he has removed, the thorn that he has used to remove it; the two being much the same in the eyes of the Supreme Lord. Even as He had assumed and discarded, as an actor does, the forms He had taken in the past, such as those of the Fish and the rest, so He now abandoned this body with which He had removed the burden of the earth. On the very day the exalted Lord Mukunda, Whose glorious story is supremely worth hearing, departed from the earth with that body¹ which was inalienably His, Kali, who prompts the ignorant to sin, began his active career (34-36).

The sagacious Yudhishtira, seeing him active in the city and the realm, in the homes and the minds of the people, engendering covetousness, untruthfulness, craftiness and cruelty—the whole brood of unrighteousness, in fact—made ready to depart from this world. The emperor crowned his grandson, who was well-trained, and in every way his equal in the possession of great qualities, as the ruler of the ocean-girdled earth at Gajāhvaya. And he likewise crowned Vajra as the ruler of the Sūrasena country at Mathurā. Then the able man performed the *prājāpatya* rite, and incorporating the sacred fires in himself, discarded, even before he left his home, everything, fine raiment, ornaments and so on, renounced the notions of 'Me' and 'Mine' and cut himself loose from all fetters of the spirit. He merged the organs in the mind, the mind in the vital breath, the latter in the Apāna Vāyu, the Apāna, along with its function of evacuation, in death, and death in the body composed of the five elements. The sage then merged the body in the three *guṇas*, and that triad in the one nescience. And that nescience, from which all phenomenal existence arises, he merged in the *jīva*, and the *jīva* in the imperishable Brahma. Clad in tree bark, abstaining from food, vowed to silence, he departed from his home with dishevelled hair, in no way different to outward seeming from an idiot, a madman or one possessed. Waiting for nobody, hearing what was said to him no more than a deaf man might, and contemplating the Supreme Brahma in the heart, he left his home

¹ His body, not composed of the elements, with which He dwells in Vaikuntha.

and went towards the north, the quarter to which great souls had always betaken themselves and from which there is no returning. And all his brothers followed him, having made up their minds to do so, seeing all men on earth tainted by the touch of Kali, whose friend is unrighteousness. Having duly achieved all the ends of life and realized that the lotus feet of the Lord of Vaikuntha were the supreme sanctuary, they concentrated their thoughts on them. Their intellects having been purified by the devotion that welled up within them as the result of that contemplation, and all their sins having been dispelled, they attained their goal in the Para Brahma known as Narayana, where they remain as pure spirit—that goal which is beyond the reach of the ignorant, who are dominated by desires. The resolute Vidura too discarded his body at Prabhāsa, with his mind anchored in Krishna, and reached his own abode in the company of the manes. Draupadī, realizing that her spouses no longer wanted her, gave her mind wholly to the Lord Vāsudeva and attained Him. He who hears with faith this account of the last journey of the sons of Pāndu, who were dear to the Lord—an account which confers all blessings and redeems from sin all those who hear it—develops devotion to Hari and is liberated (38-51).

CHAPTER XVI

THE ADVENT OF KALI

The Sūta said : Then Parīkshit, the great devotee of the Lord, who was endowed with all admirable qualities, ruled the earth under the guidance of the great Brahmanas in the manner the astrologers had foretold at the time of his birth, O Brahman. He married Irāvati, the daughter of Uttara and had four sons of her, of whom Janamejaya was the eldest. Requesting the son of Saradvān (Kṛpa) to be his Guru, he offered three horse-sacrifices, with the payment of ample fees, on the bank of the Gangā, when the gods showed themselves plainly before the eyes of men. When he was engaged in an expedition of world conquest, the valiant King vigorously

put down Kālī, a Sūdra whom he found dressed up like a king, and kicking a bull and the cow that was with it (1-4).

Saunaka here asked, 'Why was the King content with suppressing Kālī? Who was this Sūdra who paraded as a king and kicked a cow? Tell us all about it, O fortunate one, if it be part of the story of Krishna or of those who taste the honey of His lotus feet. Of what avail can vain talk, which can only help to waste one's allotted time on earth, be to men whose life is short and who are doomed to die but long for liberation? We have invoked the presence of the Lord of death at the sacrifice here, for the ritual slaughter. And no one here will die so long as Death is here. The great sages have invited him here so that all men may quaff that wonderful nectar, the story of the pastimes of Hari. The life of men, which is short enough, is in the case of the indolent and the dull-witted, wasted in sleep at night and in the discharge of worthless tasks by day' (5-10).

The Sūta said: When Parīkshit, living in the Kuru-Jāngala country, heard the not very pleasant news that Kālī had entered the realms which were under the protection of his army, he who was expert in warfare took his bow and got into his beautifully decorated chariot drawn by black horses and flying the flag with the device of the lion, and set out on an expedition of world conquest, with an army composed of chariot and elephant forces, cavalry and infantry. Subjugating Bhadrāśva, Ketumāla, Bhārata, the Uttara-kurus, Kimpurusha and other divisions, he received tribute from them. Wherever he went he heard glowing accounts of the fame won by his mighty ancestors, which brought out the greatness of Krishna. Hearing, too, of how his life had been saved from the devastating power of Āśvat-thāmā's weapon, of the great friendship that had subsisted between the Vṛshnis and the sons of Prthā, and of their devotion to Kēśava, he was greatly pleased with those who told him of these things. And the generous man, with eyes fairly abloom with joy, made them gifts of great value, raiment and necklaces. Hearing how Vishnu had served the affectionate Pāndavas as chario-

teer and counsellor, as loyal friend and envoy, how He had watched over them at night with drawn sword, followed them, praised them and showed His deference to them, and also how the world had lavished its praise and adoration on Him, the King become devoted to the lotus feet of the Lord Vishnu (11-17).

While he was thus assiduously walking in the footsteps of his ancestors, there happened, not far away, an astonishing incident of which I will now tell you. Dharma (in the form of a bull), limping along on one foot, met a cow (the earth) who was lack-lustre, her face streaming with tears, like a mother who had lost her child; and he questioned her. Dharma asked, 'Are you well, worthy dame? Your face lacks its usual brightness. From its faded look, I should think that you are deeply pained at heart. Are you grieving for some one whom you dearly love and who is far away, mother? Or do you grieve for me because I have only one leg left? Or perhaps you bewail your own fate, fearing that Sūdras will prey upon you? Or might it be that you are sorry for the gods who have been denied sacrificial offerings, or for the people who suffer by Indra's act in withholding rain? Or, perhaps, O earth, you sorrow for the women who are defenceless and for the children who suffer at the hands of their own fathers who behave like cannibals; or you grieve thinking of the plight of the Goddess of Learning fallen into the hands of Brahmanas given to wicked deeds, or of the highest Brahmanas serving under kings who are enemies of the Brahmanas. Perhaps you are unhappy, thinking of the unworthy Kshattriyas, who have fallen under the dominion of Kali, or of the kingdoms that they have abandoned to their fate, or of humanity at large, which indulges itself, without restraint or discrimination, eating and drinking, decking itself in finery, enjoying luxurious baths, and mating? Or, do you grieve, O mother earth, for Hari, Who descended into this world to relieve you of your intolerable burden, and Who has since abandoned you and vanished, as you call to mind His exploits, to think of which is to attain liberation?'¹ Tell me, earth, the cause of that agony of mind which has made you thin.

¹ (v.r.) 'Which excel *moksha* itself in the joy they bring'.

Or is it that destroyer time, which is stronger than the strongest, has marred your high estate, which the gods had admired?' (18-25).

The earth replied: 'You, O venerable Dharma, know what it is that makes me grieve, though you ask me. He, thanks to Whom you had all your four parts, which conferred all happiness on the worlds; in Whom truthfulness, purity, compassion, forbearance, liberality, contentment, straightforwardness, serenity, control of the senses, austerities, impartiality, endurance, indifference to worldly gains, inquiry into the Sāstras, self-knowledge, indifference to worldly enjoyments, sovereign power, heroic resolution, prowess, strength, judgment, independence, skill in action, charm, fortitude, tenderness, resourcefulness, modesty, good nature, vigour of mind and of the senses and organs of action, powers of enjoyment, imperturbability, steadiness, faith, fame, respectability, and the total absence of pride—these and other admirable qualities, which are to be desired by all who aspire to greatness, were innate, and never knew wane—it is He, the repository of all auspicious qualities, the Home of Srī, Whose loss to the world I mourn, as I grieve over the world's having attracted the evil eye of Kali, the prompter of sin. And I grieve, too, over the lot of all of us, myself, you, the first of the gods, the other gods, the manes, the sages, the saints, the *varṇas* and the *āśramas*. The Goddess Srī, for a casual glance from whose eyes Brahmā and other great gods practised austerities for endless years, and who is the refuge of the greatest, loves the beauty of the Lord's feet so much that she has deserted her native lotus wood to devote herself to the service of those feet. My body adorned with the auspicious footprints of the Lord, with their marks, the lotus, the thunderbolt, the goad and the banner, I outshone the three worlds by virtue of the prosperity He bestowed upon me. But when my good fortune was exhausted, He abandoned me, who had become proud. What woman can bear to be separated from Him, the Supreme Lord, Who by His own free will removed the intolerable burden that lay upon me of a hundred *akṣauhīṇīs* belonging to the kings of the *āsuric* clans; Who appeared among the

Yadus with a beautiful body to help you in your evil plight caused by the loss of your legs, and remedied your lack by the puissance innate in Him ; Who with His loving smile, winning look and delightful talk, defeated the obstinate pride of the supercilious dames of the Madhus ; Whose feet, adorning my body, made the hair stand on end with pleasure and filled me with festive joy ? ' (26-36).

As the earth and Dharma were thus conversing, the famous sage-king Parikshit reached the place where the Sarasvati takes a turn to the east (37).

CHAPTER XVII

PARIKSHIT RESTRAINS KALI

The Sūta said : There the King saw the cow and the bull, which were unfriended, being struck ; and also the Sūdra armed with a stick and wearing the insignia of royalty. Struck by the Sūdra, the bull, which was white as the lotus fibre, was suffering terribly and growing weak. It was dropping urine in its terror, and rocked on its single leg. The cow, which yielded the milk for sacred rites, was in extreme misery, as the Sūdra kicked her. She had lost her calf ; lean and hungering for grass, her face streamed with tears. As he sat in his chariot adorned with gold, his bow ready strung, he demanded in a voice of thunder, ' Who are you that violently hit the weak in your overweening strength, in this realm which is under my protection ? You have rigged yourself up like a king, as an actor does, but your action betrays the fact that you are not of the twice-born. Who are you that thus offend, when Krishna and the wielder of the Gāndīva bow have departed from this earth ? You deserve death for your offence in offering furtive violence to the innocent (1-6).

' And who may you be, that are white as the lotus fibre, and lacking three legs, move on only one ? Are you by any chance some god who, appearing thus in the form of a bull, cause us grievous distress ? Never have tears of grief, shed by any creature other than you, fallen on this earth which the Kings of the Kuru

face strain to their bosoms with their strong arms. Stop grieving, O son of Surabhi, cast off your fear of the Sūdra. Do not weep, O mother, all will be well with you, when I am here to chastise the wicked. If the people who live in a king's realm go in fear of wicked men, that heedless man forfeits his good name, life, luck and hopes of happiness hereafter, gentle dame. This is the supreme duty cast on kings, that they should relieve the distress of the sorrow-laden. I shall therefore slay this vilest of men, who causes suffering to living creatures. And who, O son of Surabhi, cut off three of the four legs you had? In the kingdom ruled by those who are the followers of Krishna, none should be found in the plight in which you are. Tell us, O bull—and may all be well with both of you—who it was that maimed you, good creature, who have done no wrong, and has tarnished the fame of the sons of Prthā? He who makes the inoffensive suffer, shall learn to dread me everywhere. When the wicked are put down, the safety of the good is assured. Even if a god, behaving as if he were a law unto himself, wrongs the innocent, I shall cut down his arm with the armlet on it. To protect those who are faithful to their own Dharma is the supreme duty of the King; who punishes as the Sāstra enjoins, those others who violate their Dharma when there is no compelling reason' (7-16).

Dharma replied, 'These words of assurance to the distressed are in every way worthy of the descendants of the Pāndavas, whose many virtues secured for them the services of the exalted Lord Krishna as ambassador and in many other capacities. Confused by the contradictory contentions of different schools, we are all of us very much in the dark, O best of men, as to who plants the seeds of sorrow and suffering. Some, who resort to specious reasoning¹, hold a man responsible for his own joys and sorrows. Others blame the gods (the evil influence of planets) while yet others attribute them to *Karma* or to "nature". Some few are certain that everything happens according to the designs of That Power (the Supreme Lord) Who is incomprehen-

¹ (alt) "Some who hide difference" i.e., the Yogis, who do not distinguish between the Ātman and the Brahma.

sible and undefinable. You should, O royal sage, use your best judgment to decide between these various assumptions' (17-20).

When Dharma said this, the emperor was freed from perplexity ; by a steady effort of the mind, he realized the truth, O best of Brahmanas. And he addressed him (Dharma) again, saying, ' You, so well-versed in Dharma, must be the god Dharma Himself in the guise of a bull. Your words point to the rule of Dharma, that the man who indicates even obliquely the transgressor against the laws of Dharma, shares his fate. It might be true, too, that the ways in which the Lord's power of Māyā fulfils itself are incomprehensible and baffle definition. The Sāstras speak of you as having four legs—austerity, purity, compassion and truthfulness. Three of these have been broken by three parts of Adharma, namely, arrogance, concupiscence and inebriety. Now (in Kali) only one leg of yours is left—truthfulness, by means of which you may still manage to maintain yourself.¹ Adharma, which has taken the form of Kali and has battered on lies, wants to deprive you of that too. And this is the good earth, whom the exalted Lord contrived to relieve of her intolerable burden, and who was invested with all auspiciousness by bearing on every part of her body His gracious foot-prints which bring all blessings. The good dame, now deserted by Him, mourns her fate, shedding tears like an ill-starred woman, as she disconsolately thinks, "Sūdras, who are unfriendly to Brahmanas, and who masquerade as kings, will rule over me " ' (21-27).

Having thus comforted Dharma and the earth, the great charioteer drew his sharp sword to slay Kali, the parent of unrighteousness. Seeing that he was bent upon despatching him, he divested himself of the insignia of royalty, and in a paroxysm of fear fell at his feet. Looking at him, who had thrown himself at his feet, that man who was worthy of all praise, who loved the lowly and was the refuge of the stricken, refrained out of pity from killing him. And he spoke to him with a smile. The King said, ' Having made your submission with clasped hands to the inheritors of Gudākeśa's

¹ (alt) ' By which a man may still garner Dharma '.

renown, you have nothing to fear from them. But your shadow must not fall on my realm, for you are the friend of Adharma. With your taking up your abode in the bodies of kings, there has followed the whole brood of Adharma—covetousness, untruthfulness, thievishness, wickedness, sin, ill-luck, fraud, strife and hypocrisy. Therefore, O ally of unrighteousness, you should not remain in Brahmāvarta, where only those who are righteous and truthful may live, and where the Lord of the sacrifice is worshipped with the offering of sacrifices by those who are well-versed in ritual, and thus worshipped, the exalted Lord Hari, Who is embodied in the sacrifice, secures the happiness and fulfils the wishes of the sacrificers, since He is the soul in all creatures, stationary and moving, and present both within and without them like air' (28-34).

The Sūta said: Thus ordered by Parīkshit, Kali in fear and trembling made his humble submission to him who had drawn his sword like Death armed with the rod of punishment. Kali said: 'I shall, as you command, live somewhere or other, O King of kings; but wherever I am, there I am sure to see you ready with bow and arrow. Therefore, O foremost of the defenders of Dharma, you should appoint a place where I may settle down permanently, obeying your orders' (35-37).

The Sūta went on: Thus entreated by him, he told him he could live where dicing, drinking, whoring and slaughter went on, giving room for four kinds of vices. Importuned by him again, the all-powerful one appointed gold for a dwelling-place, thereby throwing open to him not only the haunts of untruthfulness, pride, passion and cruelty, but also of animosity for a fifth resort. Kali, the father of unrighteousness, took up his residence in these five places given to him by the son of Uttarā, in obedience to his command. Therefore no man who wants to live worthily should be addicted to these vices; much less should the King, who as the master and mentor of his people, should be assiduous in the practice of virtue. And he restored to the bull the three supports it had lost, namely, austerity, purity and compassion; and he comforted and cherished the earth. Till recently,

he was on the throne on which he had been placed by the King, his grandfather, when he retired to the forest. That royal sage, the emperor of immense renown, ruled¹ in all opulence at Gajāhvaya, with all the dazzling brilliance and pomp of the Kaurava kings. Such was the greatness of this King, the son of Abhimanyu, during whose reign you took vows for conducting the Sattra sacrifice (38-45).

CHAPTER XVIII

PARIKSHIT'S LAPSE

The Sūta went on: He who had not died in his mother's womb, though burnt by the celestial weapon of the son of Droṇa, because of the grace vouchsafed him by the exalted Lord Krishna of the marvellous deeds, and who, with his mind absorbed in loving devotion to Krishna, was not perturbed by fear of death at the hands of Takshaka, prompted by the Brahmana's rage, abjured all attachments; and becoming the disciple of the son of Vyāsa, learnt by due inquiry the truth of the invincible Lord and discarded his body on the Gangā. Those whose discourse is all of the illustrious Lord, who savour the nectar of His story and treasure in their hearts His lotus feet, are secure against succumbing to delusion, even at the hour of death. Though Kali had come into all parts of the world, he could not prevail so long as the emperor, the great son of Abhimanyu, continued to rule over it as its overlord. On the very day and at the very moment the exalted Lord departed from the earth Kali, the parent of unrighteousness, had come into this world. The emperor, who, like the black bee, could take and use what was good in everything, did not pursue Kali with inveterate hostility, since in the Kali age good intentions forthwith yield fruit, but not evil thoughts, unless they issue in action. What can Kali do, who shows his valour only with the ignorant? He is a coward in the presence of the wise, but pounces on the heedless like the wary wolf. I have now told you the story of Parikshit, which you wanted

¹ The text uses the present tense.

to hear, and which purifies the hearer, involving as it does the doings of Krishna. Those who wish to realize their true Self should be keen on hearing the stories that bring out the qualities and achievements of the Lord, Whose tremendous exploits are supremely worth telling (1-10).

The sages said : ' O Sūta, well-favoured one, may you live for endless years, singing the spotless glory of Krishna, which is as nectar to us, mortals. As we go on with this rite, to which one may not pin one's hopes,¹ you sustain us, whose bodies are discoloured by smoke, with the heady honey of Govinda's lotus feet. We do not consider heaven or liberation itself as equal in value to a moment's association with the Lord's devotees ; how much less are those blessings that mortals prize ! Who that knows its sweetness can feel that he has had enough of the story of Him Who is the one goal of the supremely great, Who is free from the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, but Whose auspicious attributes even the lords of yoga, with Bhava and the Lotus-born at their head, have not succeeded in reckoning ? Therefore, O man of learning, you who, of all of us, have dedicated yourself chiefly to the service of the Lord, should relate at length, as we listen devoutly, the tale of Hari, the one Goal of the supremely great, that tale which purifies and confers all blessings. It was by the teaching of the son of Vyāsa that that great devotee of the Lord, Parīkshit of the mighty intellect, sought the feet of the Lord Who flies the Garuda flag, those feet that are known as *moksha*. Therefore, please expound to us in such a way that the meaning is nowhere left in doubt, the great chronicle (*Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*), heard by Parīkshit, which is extremely holy, having for its supreme purpose the induction of the hearer into the most marvellous yoga, and which, being replete with the glories of Ananta, is greatly loved by the Lord's devotees ' (11-17).

Thereupon, the Sūta said : Ah ! though I belong to a *pratiloma* caste, this day I have realized the purpose of my existence, by gaining the regard of men grown old in wisdom. By merely having speech with the supremely great, even the sin of a degraded birth and the sorrow it

¹ As such rites are likely to be vitiated by many errors.

brings one may be quickly dispelled. How much more easy should that be to one who extols the name of Him Who is the sole refuge of the highest, the exalted Lord Ananta of the limitless powers, Who is known as Ananta because in all things great are to be found those qualities which are His attributes ! To indicate how great are the qualities of Him Who is equalled by none, much less excelled, one need hardly do more than point out that the Goddess of Prosperity, disregarding the suit of others, takes the dust of His feet, Who was not drawn to her by desire. To whom else but Mukunda could the appellation Bhagavān apply, seeing that the water that Brahmā offered as *arghya* at His feet sanctified Īśa as well as the world, when it fell from the nails of His feet, and that the saintly come to love Him so much that they discard without further ado the deep-rooted attachment to the body and its adjuncts, and enter on the life of the Paramahamsa, whose characteristic *dharma* is non-violence and tranquillity? (18-22).

As desired by you, O suns of wisdom, I shall now begin my exposition, going as deep into the matter as the extent of my knowledge allows. The birds rise into the sky as far as they can, and even the wise can do no more in describing the play-life of Vishnu. Once he (the King) went hunting in the forest, armed with the bow, and pursuing the game, was exceeding tired, hungry and thirsty. He could not find any water and so entered the hermitage that he saw there. He found the sage seated inside, absolutely still, with eyes closed; his senses, life-breath, mind and intellect withdrawn from the world of objects and stilled; and himself immutable, having transcended the three states of consciousness and become one with the Brahma. His face was hidden by the matted locks in disarray, and he was covered with the skin of the antelope. He asked him, who was in that state, for water, his tongue parched with thirst. Not being offered a grass seat or shown a place to sit in, nor received with *arghya* and kind words of welcome, he was indignant, thinking that he was slighted. Goaded by the pangs of hunger and thirst, he felt all of a sudden such anger and hostility to the Brahmana as he had never known before, O Brahman.

While leaving the place, he picked up a dead snake with the end of his bow and threw it on the shoulder of the Brahmarshi. And he then returned to his city. He had done what he did, because he was uncertain as to the sage's attitude; wondering, 'Are his eyes closed because all his senses are withdrawn from the world of objects, or is he just pretending to be in the state of *samādhi*, telling himself, "Why should I bother about these worthless Kshatriyas' coming and going?"' (23-31).

The sage's young boy, who possessed the power won by austerities in an extraordinary degree, heard, while playing with other children, of the King's offence against his father. Thereupon he exclaimed in their midst, 'Look at the wickedness of these pampered rulers, these servants who sin against their master as though the crows and the watch-dogs should turn against those who feed them! These Kshatriya knaves have been placed as sentinels at the gate by the Brahmana. How dare they, who ought to stand at the door, enter the house and eat out of the vessel inside! I shall punish those who violate the norms of Dharma, now that the exalted Lord Krishna, the Chastiser of trespassers, is gone; you shall see my power' (32-35).

Saying this to his friends, the sage's son, his eyes red with anger, performed *āchamana* with the water of the Kauśiki and launched his verbal thunderbolt: 'This day week, Takshaka, doing my bidding, shall bite that firebrand who would burn up his own family, the man who offended against my father, setting at nought the restraints of Dharma.' Then the boy went home to the hermitage. On seeing his father with the dead snake about his neck, he was overwhelmed with grief and wept aloud. Hearing his son cry, the scion of the Āngirases slowly opened his eyes, O Brahman. Seeing the dead snake on his shoulder, he threw it away, and asked his son, 'Why do you weep, my child? Who has wronged you?' And he told him (36-40).

When he heard of the curse laid upon the King, who did not deserve to be thus treated, the Brahmana was not at all pleased with his son. 'Alas, in your ignorant folly, you have done a great wrong, inflicting a

punishment out of all proportion to the venial fault. You are a child still, with no ripe judgment. You should not equate with ordinary men the King, who is regarded as Vishnu Himself, since his subjects, protected by his irresistible power, enjoy all the blessings of life, freed from all cause of fear. If the Lord armed with the discus, whom we know as King, is not to be seen for a day, the world would perish instantly, my child, infested by robbers, like a flock of sheep without a shepherd. When men are robbed of their wealth, because there is none to protect them and there is a multitude of despoilers, many men turn into thieves and kill, curse and plunder each other of their women, beasts and goods; and we shall incur the sin for the consequences, though we did not cause them. In such a state of affairs the way of life practised by men who are exemplars, which is based on the Vedas and the observance of *varṇa* and *āśrama dharmas*, must also decay. The result will be the mixing up and confusion of *varṇas* among those whose hearts are wholly set on wealth and pleasure, as in the case of apes and dogs (41-45).

‘This King has been a defender of Dharma. He is an emperor of immense renown. The royal sage is a great devotee of the Lord; he has offered the horse sacrifice. He was in sore straits, suffering from hunger, thirst and fatigue; how could we curse him? May the exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, pardon the transgression of a callow youngster against His innocent devotees. The devotees of the Lord Vishnu do not retaliate, though they could, against any one who might vilify, deceive, abuse, pour scorn upon or even beat them.’ The great sage, who was thus distressed by his son’s offence, did not dwell for a moment on the King’s offence in treating him with disrespect. Good men rarely grieve or rejoice, when others cause them pleasure or pain, since neither happiness nor misery is native to the soul (46-50).

CHAPTER XIX

SRI SUKA COMES ON THE SCENE

The Sūta said : The King, brooding over his reprehensible act, was exceedingly unhappy. ' Alas, I behaved meanly like a cad towards the blameless Brahmana, whose greatness was not apparent to the eye. Without a doubt this affront to the Lord will ere long bring me endless sorrow and suffering. Let it come in abundant measure, and to me directly, so that I may expiate my sin and not offend again in this way. Let the fire that is the Brahmana, fanned to a blaze, burn up forthwith my empire, army and ample treasury, so that never again I, sinner that I am, may entertain wicked thoughts against the Brahmanas, the gods and the cows ' (1-3).

As he brooded thus, he heard of death in the person of Takshaka decreed for him by the sage's son. And he welcomed the prospect of Takshaka's consuming him quickly, as that would wean from attachments one who was too much addicted to the world of the senses. Then, rejecting both this world and the next, having long since concluded after careful consideration that they were not worth while, he began a fast till death on the bank of the celestial stream (Gangā), convinced that adoration of the feet of Krishna was the highest of human goals. ' Who that is about to die will not seek her out, whose waters excel all others, carrying as they do the dust of the feet of Krishna mixed with the glorious basil, and purify the worlds, as well as their Guardians, both within and without ? ' (4-6).

The scion of the Pāṇdavas, reflecting thus, decided on this fast on the bank of the river that flows from Vishnu's foot, and he renounced all attachments and activity, and adopting the vow of the ascetic meditated on the feet of Mukunda undistracted by other thoughts. And there the high-souled sages came to him with their disciples, those men who purify the worlds. The saintly, while ostensibly engaging in pilgrimages to holy places, mostly do so to confer sanctity on them. Atri, Vasishta, Chyavana, Saradvān, Arishtanemi, Bhṛgu, Angiras, Parāśara, the son of Gādhī (Viśvāmītra), Paraśurama, Utathya, Indrapramada, Idhmavāha, Medhā-

tithi, Devala, Ārshtishaṇa, Bhāradwāja, Gautama, Pippalāda, Maitreya, Aurva, Kavasha, Agasthya, Dvaipāyana and the blessed sage Nārada came; and so did other great and celestial Brahmana sages as well as the royal sages, and also Aruṇa and others. The King duly honoured the assembled sages, who were the chiefs of the different *rishi* clans, and bowed his head down to the ground. When they were comfortably seated, that man of pure heart prostrated himself once again before them, and standing before them with joined palms, he told them what he wished to do (7-12).

The King said, 'Ah! how supremely blest we are, among Kings, to be deemed worthy of the gracious notice of the noblest of men by reason of our conduct. The race of Kshatriyas whose conduct is blameable deserves to be kept at a greater distance from Brahmanas than even the place where water that has washed their feet falls. To me, the sinner, who clung with unabated attachment to house and home, the Lord Who rules all things, high and low, came in the form of the Brahmana's curse, making me disgusted with the worldly life; since such a curse induces fear forthwith in the heart of him who is the slave of his affections. Let the Brahmanas and the goddess Gangā know that I, anchoring my mind in the Lord, throw myself on their mercy. Let Takshaka bite me, as bidden by the Brahmana, openly or in disguise, and just as he please. Only tell me of the deeds of Krishna. Whatever births I might take, may my heart find all delight in the exalted Lord Ananta, and may I know close association with and devotion to His devotees, and feel friendly towards all living beings. I offer my salutations to the Brahmanas' (13-16).

Having thus resolved, the heroic King placed upon his son the responsibility for ruling the country, and then took his seat, facing north, on the southern bank of the queen of the sea, on *darbha* grass placed lengthwise pointing east. When the King of kings thus sat down on the earth with the resolve to fast till death, the gods, assembled in heaven in large numbers, gladly praised him and repeatedly showered flowers on him, and the celestial kettle-drums sounded (17-18).

The great sages, who had assembled there, praised him and applauded his resolve. And they, to whom promoting the welfare of the people came naturally and was their strength, spoke to him who shone by the possession of the virtues that the great praise. They said: 'That you, who belong to the family who are ardent devotees of Krishna, should do this is not surprising, O first of royal sages. For in their eagerness to be by the side of the Lord they instantly renounced the imperial throne to which crowned heads bowed.' And the sages told each other, 'We shall all remain here till this great devotee of the Lord discards his body and goes to the highest world where there is neither delusion nor sorrow' (19-21).

Parikshit, hearing those words of the assembled sages, which showed their impartiality and goodwill, and fell so soothingly on the ear, and which were at once profound and true, addressed them in his eagerness to hear of the exploits of Vishnu: 'You, who are like the Vedas that exist above the three worlds in concrete and visible forms, have come here from all quarters. You have no ends in view either here or hereafter except the shedding of your blessings on others, which comes naturally to you. Therefore, O Brahmanas, I ask you with the fullest confidence a question bearing upon one's duty—what is the right and proper thing to do in all circumstances, and, especially, what is the blameless course that one who is about to die should take? You, who are well-versed in such matters, should consider and tell me' (22-24).

Just then there came there by chance the blessed son of Vyāsa, who wandered over the earth wanting nothing, carrying no marks by which he could be placed, and supremely content in the bliss of the Self, finding all sufficiency in it. He looked like one of those waifs and strays whom the world has discarded, and he was followed by a crowd of women and boys. Sixteen years of age; with every limb—feet, hands, thighs, arms, shoulders and cheeks—as well as the torso, delicately moulded; the face with its long and beautiful eyes, lofty nose, symmetrical ears and lovely eyebrows; the shapely neck like the right-whorled *chank*; the collar

bone well-padded, the chest broad and high, the deep navel, the charming belly with its folds—he looked like the first of the great gods, as he stood there, nude, with his ringlets in disarray and his long arms at rest. Dark-hued, he had the radiance of eternal youth and the enchanting smile which won the hearts of women (25-28).

Though his glory was veiled, the sages, who knew his greatness, stood up to receive him. With bowed head Vishṇurāta made his obeisance to him who came as a chance guest and offered him all honours. The ignorant folk, women and children, were turned away. And, duly worshipped, he took the seat of honour. He who was greater than the greatest shone amidst that assembly of great Brahmana sages, celestial sages and royal sages, splendid as the moon surrounded by the hosts of planets, constellations and fixed stars (28-30).

Approaching the sage of the unbaffled intellect as he sat there, a picture of serene quietude, the King, the devotee of the Lord, made his obeisance to him with bowed head; and with joined palms and a collected mind he addressed him in pleasing words, bowing once again. Parikshit said: 'Great indeed in our good fortune this day, O Brahman, that we, ordinary Kshattriyas, should have won the regard of the saintly; for coming here as a guest moved by compassion, you have made us worthy of such regard. When even the homes of those who so much as think of the like of you are purified by the very thought, need we say how great is the sanctifying effect of seeing and touching you, washing your feet, and offering you a seat? Assuredly even the most heinous sins of men must be destroyed by your presence in their midst, O master-yogi, as Asuras perish in the proximity of Vishnu. I would fain hope that the exalted Lord Krishna is pleased with me, and because He loved the sons of Pāndu, has for the sake of His cousins extended His kindness to me as a relation. How is it possible otherwise for men who are at death's door to have a glimpse of you, the perfected, whose ways are inscrutable, and from whose coming here it might seem as if you wished to induce me to solicit your help for my redemption? Therefore, I would like to know from you, the supreme Guru of yogis, what

the mortal, who is doomed to die, should do in this life, to win liberation. Tell me, Lord, what men should hear about, what *japa* they should do, what object they should meditate upon and what worship; and also tell me what are those things that they must not do. You are not known, O blessed sage, to stop in the house of any householder for even as long as it takes to milk a cow' (31-39).

The Sūta said: Addressed by the King in those engaging words and questioned, the blessed son of Bādarāyaṇa, who knew Dharma, duly answered him (40).

(Here ends the *First Book* of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD - BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

SRI SUKA EXHORTS TO DEVOTION

Srī Suka said : You have asked, O King, the best of all possible questions, in enquiring what it is that is supremely worth speaking or hearing about ; for it is conducive to the good of mankind and has the approbation of those who have realized the Self. As to the things that those men would wish to know, who lead the householder's life¹ and are attached to domestic pleasures, not having found the truth about the Self, there are thousands of them, great King. Their life is wasted away in sleep at night and in the pleasures of sex, and in the quest of wealth or the care of the family by day. The man who is absorbed in thoughts of his own self, wife and children, possessions and dependants, in spite of their unreality, does not realize their transitoriness, though he sees them continually perishing. Therefore, O scion of the Bharatas, the man who longs for release should hear of the glories of the exalted Lord Hari, the Soul in all creatures, the Controller of all hearts ; he should speak His praises and think on Him. Life can bring no greater gain to men from discriminating knowledge, or the practice of *ashtāṅga-yoga* or the faithful discharge of their ordained duties, than this, that at the end of their life they remember Narayana. As you know, O King, even those sages who have gone beyond rule and prohibition and are established in the unconditioned Brahma mostly delight in discoursing on the glorious qualities of Hari (1-7).

The Purāṇa which is known to fame as the *Bhāgavatam*, and which is the equal of the Vedas, I learnt at the end of the Dvāpara age from my father Dvaipāyana.

¹ With its domestic chores, which inevitably involve the practice of violence.

And this story, which I learnt because my heart was ravished by the pastimes of the illustrious Lord, though I was established in the contemplation of the unconditioned Brahma, I shall now relate for your benefit, since you are a devotee of the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu). Disinterested devotion to Mukunda wells up instantly in the hearts of those who listen to it with faith and zeal. It is settled doctrine that incessant recitation of the names of Hari is the means of realizing their wishes for those who entertain desires, and of winning freedom for those who are disgusted with life and long for liberation; while, for the enlightened, it is its own reward. What is the use of endless years here on earth to the heedless man who does not notice their passage? Far better an hour (of life), of whose value he is acutely aware, for it will make him strive his best to achieve the supreme end of life. The famous sage, King Khatvāṅga, coming to know that only so much of life on earth was left to him, renounced everything within that hour and reached Hari, the Refuge. But you, O scion of the Kurus, have seven whole days to live yet, within which you should secure your happiness in the next world (8-14).

When the end comes, a man should set aside all fear (of death), and sever with the sword of non-attachment his affection for the body and those who are connected with it. Leaving his home, he should take firm vows, bathe in some sacred stream, sit down on a properly arranged seat in a clean and secluded place and mentally (silently) repeat the triple syllable,¹ the highest of all, indicative of the Brahma. And then, without discontinuing recitation of the *Pranava*, he should restrain the mind by controlling the breath. With the will for charioteer he should, by means of the mind, restrain the senses from running after their objects. And by the force of the resolute intellect he should fix the mind, distracted by the impulses that tend to activity, on that Form of the Lord which is the abode of all that is auspicious. Then he should meditate on each limb of the Lord's body, without taking the mind off the entire figure. Then, emptying the mind of all objects, he should steady it, allowing no memory to disturb it.

¹ Om (the *Pranava*).

That is the Brahma, the supreme essence of Vishnu, where the mind is stilled (in absolute Bliss). If the mind is again distracted by *rajas* or enveloped by *tamas*, the resolute man should restrain it by concentration, which will remove the disturbance caused by them. As the yogi, when he thus concentrates, perceives the Form of the Lord, which is all that is auspicious, he quickly attains perfection in that yoga which brings absorption in the Lord from loving devotion (15-21).

The King asked : ' How is this concentration to be practised, O Brahman ; and on what object should the mind be fixed, and in what manner, so that the impurities of the mind may be quickly removed ? ' (22).

Srī Suka replied : Having accustomed himself to an easy posture and won control over the breath, he, who should have discarded all attachments and subdued the senses, should, by an effort of will, fix the mind on the gross form of the Lord. This cosmic body of His is enormous in size ; therein is to be seen the entire phenomenal universe, past, present and future. In this body, called ' the cosmic egg,' with its seven coverings, is the Lord, the Ruler of the cosmic *jīva*, and it is He that is the object of concentration. Those who know speak of Pātāla as the sole of the Creator's foot, of Rasātala as His forefoot and heel, of Mahātala as His ankles, of Talātala as His shanks, of Sutala as the knees of Him in Whom is contained the universe, of Vitala and Atala as the upper and under sides of His thighs, of Mahītaḷa, the earth, as His hip and loins, and the firmament as the lake that is His navel, O King. They speak of the heavens with their luminaries as His breast, of the Mahar-loka as His neck, of the Jana-loka as His face, of the Tapoloka as the forehead of the Primordial Lord, and of the Satyaloka as the heads of the Lord of the Thousand Heads. They speak of Indra and the other gods as His arms, of the quarters as His ears, and of sound as His sense of hearing ; of the Aśvins as the nostrils of the Supreme Lord, and of smells as His sense of smell ; of the blazing fire as His mouth, of the sky as His eye-balls, and of the sun as His faculty of vision ; of day and night as Vishnu's eyelashes ; of Brahmā's seat as the play of His eyebrows ; of water as His

palate and of the sense of taste as His tongue. They speak of the Vedas as the aperture in the crown of the head of the Infinite Lord, of Yama as His canine tooth, of human attachments as His ordinary teeth, of Māyā, which confounds the world, as His smile, and of the boundless ocean of creation as His sidelong glance. They speak of modesty as His upper lip, of covetousness as His lower lip, of Dharma as His right breast and of the path of unrighteousness as His back, of the Prajāpati as His organ of generation, of Mitra and Varuṇa as His testicles, of the sea as His belly and the mountains as His skeleton, of the rivers as His veins, and of the trees as the hair on the body of Him Who has the universe in His body, O King; of the air as the breath of Him Who is of infinite strength, of time as His movement, and of the transmigratory life of all beings as His play. They speak of the clouds as the hair on the head of the Paramount Lord, of the twilights as the garments of the Omnipotent, O best of the Kurus, of the Pradhāna as His heart, and of the moon as His mind, the repository of all changes. They speak of the Mahat as His power of intelligence, of Gītrā (Śrī Rudra) as the ego of the All-Soul; of horses and mules, camels and elephants as His nails. All deer and other animals should be meditated upon as present in His hip and loins. They speak of the birds as His splendid handiwork, of Manu as His intellect and of man as His abode; of the Gandharvas and Vidyādharas, the Chāraṇas and the Apsarases as His gamut of notes, of the Asura hosts as His might. Of this mighty Soul the Brahmana is the face, the Kshatriya the arms, the Vaiśya the thighs; the dark-complexioned one (Sūdra), is connected with the feet. The sacrifices with which the various companies of the gods, who are to be worshipped, and who are known under different names, are associated, and which are consummated with the offering of oblations in the fire, are to be looked upon as the means of propitiating Him (23-37).

Thus much I have said about the extent and the disposition of the various limbs of the body of the Lord. It is on this enormous body, outside which there is nothing, that the yogis concentrate their minds by an effort

of will. The Lord is the Ātman, the One without a second, Who experiences everything through the mental modes of all creatures, just as in a dream the one *jīva* experiences the sensations of the many bodies that it conjures up. One should cleave to Him, Who is the truth and the treasure-house of all bliss, not to aught else, since that could only lead to one's fall (38-39).

CHAPTER II

WHERE THE DEVOTEE GOES AFTER DEATH

Srī Suka said: In the far past the Self-created (Brahmā) recovered, by the grace of Hari, Who was pleased with his sustained concentration of mind, his lost¹ memory of creation, and with unerring intuition and precise knowledge recreated the universe as it had been before its dissolution. The Veda has a beguiling way of representing the way of works and the fruits thereof. The man who dwells with longing on those pleasures which it promises, and which are hardly more than names, being devoid of content, wanders in the shadowy worlds (which are the fruits of *karma*), imagining like the dreamer that he is happy, because of tendencies inherited from the past, but finds no true happiness. Therefore the man of wisdom should concern himself with those shadowy gratifications only to the extent needed for sustaining life, and that too, taking care not to get entangled in them, and never losing sight of their true nature. He should cease from all efforts in this behalf if these essential needs are satisfied otherwise. Why go to the trouble of procuring a bed when you have the earth, or pillows when you have the arms with which you were born? When you can receive your food in your cupped hands, where is the need for various utensils? When there are the four quarters, let alone tree bark, and so on, why go in for fine clothes? Are not rags to be picked up by the wayside? Are there not trees, those sustainers of life, to give you alms? Have the streams gone dry? Are the caves blocked up? Does

¹ Lost, when the Deluge engulfed the worlds.

not the Invincible Lord (Hari) look after those who put their trust in Him? Why then do even those who ought to know better wait upon men who are dead drunk with the pride of wealth? The man who has come to feel thus should devote himself with joy in his heart, arising from the realization of His true nature, to the worship of the gracious and eternal Lord, Who is ever present in his heart of His own free will, being his soul, and thus dear to him, as well as being the One Reality. Such worship results in the destruction of nescience, the root cause of the transmigratory life. What man, other than those unfortunates who are bemused by their absorption in *karma*, would neglect the continuous contemplation of the Supreme Lord and hanker after sensual pleasure, when he sees that men (who succumbed to it) have fallen into the *Vaitaraṇī*¹ (the transmigratory existence) and are undergoing the miseries which are the result of their own actions? (1-7).

Some focus their minds on the Lord Who, but a span in size, occupies the space within their hearts; Who has four arms and carries the lotus, the discus, the mace and the conch. Till the mind gets steadied by such concentration, one should go on gazing on the Supreme Lord, Who² presents Himself when one thinks of Him, with His gracious face and eyes long as lotus petals; clad in raiment tawny like the filaments of the *kadamba* blossom; wearing armlets of gold set with flashing brilliants, and a crown and ear-pendants that dazzle the eye with their priceless jewels; with those feet like tender shoots that the master-yogi places in the pericarp of the blown lotus that is his heart; with the mark (on His breast) which betokens the presence of the Goddess of Grace, and the Kausthubha jewel on His neck; His whole figure covered from head to foot with the garland of wild flowers of the unfading glory; adorned with girdle and rings, anklets and bracelets of great price; with the lovely smile on the face, which shines with the glossy, jet-black curls, and the wrinkling of the eyebrows, lit up by the playful laughter in the eyes, that indicates His infinite grace. He should medi-

¹ The Hindu Styx.

² (Lit.) Who is of the substance of thought.

tate on the features of the Lord, the Wielder of the Mace, taking them one by one, from the feet to the smile on the face. When any feature comes to mind readily when recalled, he should go on to concentrate on the next, till that too becomes firmly fixed in the memory. So long as abiding love for the Lord of the universe, the Witness in all hearts, the All-Highest, is not generated in him, he should, having done the obligatory daily rites, concentrate his mind with all due discipline on the gross form of the Cosmic Purusha (8-14).

When such a yogi wishes to cast off this body,¹ my friend, let him not be too particular about time or place. Sitting at ease on a steady seat he, who has established control over the breath, should curb his senses by the mind. Then controlling his mind by the pure and purposive intellect, he should merge the latter in the *jīva* (the knower-of-the-field), that *jīva* in the pure *jīva*, and the latter in the Brahma; and the yogi should cease from all activity, having thus won tranquillity. Time, which is supreme over the gods, has no power over the Ātman; how then could the gods have any, though they control the destinies of all creatures? For in the Ātman there is neither *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, nor the ego, the Mahat or the Pradhāna. It is described as the Abode of Vishnu, and therefore the Supreme Goal, by those who, discarding everything that is not the Ātman, repudiating all erroneous notions such as identifying the body with the soul, and giving their love to nothing else, embrace in their hearts the foot of the Adorable (Vishnu) every moment (15-18).

The sage who thus realizes his identity with the Brahma, having expelled from his heart the lingering love of enjoyment by the strength of the enlightenment that comes from *sāstraic* knowledge, should cease from the travail of life. Closing up the anus (Mūla-ādhāra) with the heel, he should lead the life-breath upward through the six centres successively, having first conquered all weariness. Leading it from the navel (Manipūraka) to the heart (Anāhata), the sage should then take it to

¹ The discipline prescribed up to this point is for those who expect death at any moment. What follows is for those who of their own accord wish to discard the body (S).

the base of the neck (*Viśuddhi*) through the *Udāna* passage. Then he, who should have established control over his *chitta*, should slowly and judiciously lead it to the root of the tongue. From there, he should raise it to the junction of the eyebrows (the *Ājñā-chakra*) after blocking the seven orifices. If he has freed himself from all desires he will, with unerring insight, realize the *Brahma*, and so, after retaining the breath there for a brief while, pierce through the aperture in the crown of the head and relinquish the body and the senses (19-21).

If he should wish, O King, to go to the world of *Brahmā* or to the pleasure-grounds of the adepts, who move in the skyey regions, where they command the eight supernatural powers, or to any other place whatsoever within the cosmos (which is the product of the combinations of *gunas*), he should, while discarding the body, take with him the mind and the senses. It is said that the perfected yogis can move at will, with the subtle body, anywhere within or without the three worlds. None can win by the practice of rites this freedom of movement which is enjoyed by those who devote themselves to meditation and worship, the practice of austerities (the *Dharma* pleasing to the Lord) and to yoga and the gaining of enlightenment. Traversing the heavenly way that leads to the *Brahmaloka* through the brilliant passage of the *sushumnā*, the yogi goes first to the abode of the deity who presides over fire. Then, purged of all taint, he rises upwards, O King, to the circle of luminaries known as the *Śiśumāra* (the 'Dolphin'), over which *Hari* presides. Passing beyond that place of *Hari*, which is the navel of the universe, he, with his immaculate subtle body, goes alone to the abode of those who have realized the *Brahma* (*Mahar-loka*), that Abode which receives the worshipful homage of all others, and where the sages, whose life is co-terminous with the duration of a *Mahā-kalpa*, take their ease. Then, when he sees the three worlds ablaze with the fire from the mouth of *Ananta*, he goes to the blessed world of *Brahmā*, which lasts for a '*dvi-parārdha*', and is filled with the habitations of the great adepts, and where there is no sorrow, old age, death or suffering, much less fear, except the mental pain arising from con-

templation of the life of endless suffering of those who are strangers to the happiness of devoted meditation on the exalted Lord (22-27).

Then the yogi fearlessly enters with his subtle body the first cosmic sheath, constituted of the earth, and in the form of the earth enters the second sheath of water without feeling the least anxiety. And he then becomes a luminous being first, entering the sheath of fire. And when the desire for enjoyment (in that state) is over, he enters Vāyu (the air); and then in the form of Vāyu he enters space, which is (to be meditated upon as) the body of the Paramātmān. Then he enters successively the subtle element of smell through the faculty of smell, of taste through the tongue, of colour through the eyes, of touch through the skin, of sound through the ears, and participates in every mode of action through the appropriate organ of action. The *yōgi* then passes on to the ego with its three forms, from which originate respectively the subtle elements, the organs of sense and action, and the mind, as well as the gods who preside over the senses, and which now absorbs them again. Then, proceeding further along with the ego, he enters the Mahat, and passes on thence into the Pradhāna where the *guṇas* are merged. In the form of Pradhāna he lives, and when that limiting adjunct too falls, he remains in a state of bliss, united with the Paramātmān, Who is Bliss incarnate That knows no change. He who has attained this goal of the devotees of the Lord never more returns here, my dear (28-31).

These are the two paths, proclaimed by the Vedas, and eternal, of which you wanted to know, and which the exalted Lord Vāsudeva revealed in the far past to Brahmā, when the latter propitiated and questioned Him. There is indeed no pleasant and easy way which he who has been caught up in the transmigratory life can take to escape from it, except that which induces sustained devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. The Lord Brahmā investigated the Vedas in their entirety thrice with one-pointed attention, and chose that way, which according to his best judgment, would lead one to the love of Hari, the Ātman. The exalted Lord Hari is seen in all creatures as the Ātman (the Inner Ruler and

Controller of the *jīva*) by the intellect and other faculties ; and this is also known indirectly by inference from the functioning of the faculties (intellect, and so on), which posit a perceiver, as they themselves are percepts (and therefore material), and being themselves instruments, presuppose an agent. Therefore, O King, all men should, everywhere and at all times, hear the praises of the exalted Lord Hari, and themselves sing His praises, and meditate on Him. Those who imbibe that nectar collected in the ears, the story of the exalted Lord, Whom the saintly see as their own soul, cleanse the heart of the taint of sense pleasures, and reach His lotus feet (32-37).

CHAPTER III

THE FRUITS OF WORSHIP

Srī Suka went on : The duty, in regard to which you questioned me, of wise men who are at the point of death, has been laid down in the Sāstras as I have described it. The man who is desirous of the lustre that Vedic knowledge confers should worship Brahmā. He who wants to possess all his faculties in the fullest perfection should worship Indra. He who desires progeny should worship the Patriarchs. He who wants abundance should worship the Goddess Māyā (Durgā). He who aspires to splendour should worship the god of fire. He who wants wealth and goods should worship the Vasus. The man who wants prowess achieves his ambition instantly by worshipping the Rudras. He who is desirous of food should worship Aditi, he who wants to go to heaven, Aditi's sons (the twelve Ādityas). He who wants to obtain sovereignty should worship the Viśvedevas ; if he wants to gain the allegiance of his people, he should worship the Sādhyas. He who wants length of life should worship the celestial twins, the Aśvins, and he who wants to be well nourished should worship the earth. He who wishes to be firmly established in his position should worship heaven and earth, the parents of all creatures. He who desires beauty

should worship the Gandharvas; he who wants a woman for spouse should worship the heavenly nymph Urvaśī. He who aspires to paramountcy over all should worship Parameshti (Brahmā, the Chief of the creators). The aspirant to fame should worship Yajna (the Lord of the sacrifice, Vishnu) and the seeker of treasure should propitiate Prachetas (Varuṇa). He who is desirous of learning should worship Girīśa (Śiva), and he who wants conjugal felicity should worship the Goddess Umā, the devoted wife. He who wishes to excel in virtue should worship the illustrious Lord (Vishnu). The man who would ensure continuity of his line should worship the manes. He who wants protection against his enemies should worship the Punyajanas (Yakshas), while he who desires strength should worship the gods. He who aspires to a kingdom should worship the Manus (Lords of the Manvantaras). He who wants to compass the destruction of his foes should worship the Rākshasa Nirrti. He who desires enjoyments should worship the moon, and he who yearns for the cessation of all desire should worship the Supreme Lord Who is beyond the reach of Prakṛti. He who entertains no desires whatsoever, or who wants the fulfilment of every possible desire, or who is wise in wishing for nothing less than liberation, should worship the Supreme Lord Who is free from all attributes, with intense devotion (1-10).

The highest gain that accrues to those who thus worship the various gods is the rising of unshakable love in their hearts for the exalted Lord from association with His devotees. Who that has once tasted the joy of it will not love to listen to the stories of Hari, when that brings the illumination which stills the surging tides of passion and that in its turn induces serenity of mind and consequently distaste for enjoyments¹ and leads to the practice of devotion, which is regarded as the sure way to the attainment of *Kaivalya*? (11-12).

Here Saunaka asked the chronicler, 'Having heard what he said, what else did the King, the chief of the Bharatas, ask of the sage and seer,² the son of Vyāsa?

¹ (v. r.) 'which . . . induces detachment from objects of desire here and hereafter'. ² Rshi: one who had realized the Brahma; Kavi: one well versed in the Veda.

You should, O Sūta, learned one, tell us, who shall listen attentively. Where devotees of the Lord foregather, there all talk is bound to lead to the praise of the glories of Hari. That King, the scion of the Pāṇdavas and a great chariot-warrior, was a devotee of the Lord, whose pastime as a child playing with toys was the worship of Krishna; while the blessed son of Vyāsa put his trust wholly in Vāsudeva. When the saintly come together, one may expect to hear elevated discourses on the qualities of the Lord Who is much sung. The sun, rising and setting, wastes away the lives of all men except those who spend at least a moment speaking of the illustrious Lord. Do not the trees live, and the bellows breathe? Do not other domestic animals eat and copulate? The man who has never heard of Gadāgraja (the Elder Brother of Gada) is an animal rated as no better than cur or swine, camel or ass. The ears of the man who does not listen to the tale of the exploits of the Lord Who is much sung are, alas, but empty holes. Not less contemptible than the croaking of the frog is the blabbing of the man who does not join in singing the praises of the Lord Who is sung by the great. The head of him who does not prostrate himself before Mukunda cannot but be a burden to him, adorned though it be with silk headgear or a diadem. And no better than a dead man's hands, though they wear bracelets of shining gold, are the hands of him who does not employ them in the worship of Hari. Those eyes that do not gaze on the image of Vishnu are no better than the eyes on peacock plumes; and those feet that do not take one to the sacred shrines of Hari might as well have been the roots of trees. He is no better than a corpse that lives and breathes, who has never bathed in the dust of the feet of the devotees of the Lord or has not gratefully inhaled the fragrance of the holy basil that has been offered in worship at the feet of Vishnu. That, alas, is a heart of stone which does not melt on hearing the names of Hari extolled, with tears springing to the eyes and the hair on the body standing erect in ecstasy. You, my friend, utter nothing but what is both good and pleasant. So tell us what the son of Vyāsa, who is foremost among the devotees of the Lord and well

versed in the Science of the Self, told the King on hearing his pertinent question' (13-25).

CHAPTER IV

SUKA'S HYMN TO VISHNU

The Sūta said: Having pondered those words of the son of Vyāsa, which gave him certain knowledge of the nature of the Self, the son of Uttarā was confirmed in his righteous resolve that Krishna should have his whole-hearted allegiance. He shed the sense of possessiveness in regard to his own body, his sons, wife, house, cattle, wealth and kin, and the kingdom that was wholly free from troubles. The high-minded man asked just those questions that you have asked me, O saintly ones, in his eagerness to hear of the greatness of Krishna (1-4).

Realizing that death was at hand, he renounced all actions directed towards securing the three ends of life, firm in his loving conviction that the Lord Vāsudeva was his own Self. The King said: 'The words that come from you, the omniscient sage, are supremely right, O Brahman, flawless one; since as you begin to relate the story of Hari, the darkness that envelops my mind scatters. I would like to hear once again how the exalted Lord, using His Māyā, created this mysterious universe, which baffles even the Lords of creation; how the All-pervading Lord maintains it, and again abstracts it within Himself; by utilizing what powers the Supreme Lord of infinite power creates in the spirit of play, and makes Himself (in the person of Brahmā and others) responsible for multiplying creation and finds entertainment in it. The doings of the exalted Lord Hari of the marvellous deeds are without a doubt such as to confound even the wisest, O Brahman. Does He, the One and Only Existent, utilize, as the Purusha, the *guṇas* of Prakṛti all at once, or does He, taking different forms, perform many different tasks, employing the appropriate qualities? You, blessed one, should solve my doubts in this matter, for you know the true inwardness of the Veda, and have also realized the Supreme Brahma' (5-10).

The Sūta said : Thus begged by the King to expatiate on the glorious qualities of Hari, he let his mind dwell for a brief while on Hṛshikeśa and then began his discourse. 'Salutations to the Lord, the All-Highest, of immeasurable glory, Who takes to Himself the three powers¹ for playing His play, which brings about the creation, the preservation and the destruction of the universe ; Who is the Inner Ruler in all creatures ; Whose ways are inscrutable. Again salutations to Him Who puts an end to the sorrows of the righteous and destroys the wicked ; Whose form is compact of pure *sattva* ; Who, above all, is the Revealer of that Self which those who have entered the order of the Paramahansas seek with unwearied effort by repeated enquiry. I make my prostrations again and again to Thee, the Protector of Thy devotees, Whom those that are lacking in devotion do not know even where to look for ; Who delightest in Thine own essence, the Brahma, Which is clothed with that splendour which knows neither equal nor superior. I offer my salutations again and again to Him Whose fame is all that is auspicious ; by singing His praises, with their minds dwelling upon Him, reverently gazing on His images, making their prostrations to Him, listening to the tale of His glories and offering Him worship, men are rid instantly of their sins. Salutations to Him of the blessed renown, by offering worship at Whose feet men of discrimination free the mind from attachment to this world and the next alike, and relieved of all weariness, reach the goal that is the Brahma. Salutations to Him of the glory that brings all blessings, by dedicating all their activities to Whom, and only so, can the men who practise austerities, or who are zealous in works of charity, the winners of fame, the yogis, the adepts in *mantra-japa*, the men of exemplary conduct, know the highest good. Salutations to Him to Whom all things are possible and by seeking the protection of Whose devotees even Kirātas, Hūṇas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Ābhīras, Kankas, Yavanas, and Khasas as well as others who have sinned, are purified. May that self-same Lord Whom men of discrimination meditate upon as their own Self,

¹ Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

and Who is worshipped variously by others as the Paramount Overlord, the Sum of all the Vedas,¹ incarnate Dharma, and the Abode of all austerities, and Whose blessed form is gazed upon with wonder and admiration by Aja (Brahmā) and Sankara and the like, whose devotion is transparently honest—may He be gracious to me, He, the Spouse of the Goddess of Grace, the God of the Sacrifice, the Lord of all creatures, the Ruler of all intellects, the Master of the universe, the Paramount Lord of the earth, the Sovereign and Protector of the Andhakas, Vṛshnis and Sātvatas, and the Support of the good. May the exalted Lord Mukunda be gracious to me; by constantly dwelling with love on His feet, which is *dhyāna* (contemplation), the minds of men are purged and they are able to see the truth of the Self, while merely learned men speak of It according to their prepossessions. May He, the foremost of those who impart the supreme knowledge, be gracious to me—He who, in the far past, with a view to rekindling in the heart of Aja (Brahmā) his memory of the work of creation, prompted the Goddess of Speech in this behalf, who thereupon issued from his mouth with all her attributes complete. May He clothe my words with beauty—He, the all-pervading Lord, Who creates these bodies with the gross elements and dwells in them (as the Inner Ruler) and so is called the Purusha and, as the Activator of the sixteen parts, governs their functions. Salutations to the blessed Vyāsa of the commanding intellect, from whose lotus mouth flowed the honey of wisdom that the devotees drank. It was this very teaching, which Hari Himself had imparted to him, that the Self-existent, the repository of the Vedas, communicated to Nārada when the latter questioned him' (11-25).

CHAPTER V

BRAHMĀ ON THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Nārada said*: 'Salutations to Thee, O God of gods, Creator and Fore-born, pray teach me how one may arrive at a vivid realization of the truth of the Self.

¹ 'One who is to be worshipped by the means prescribed in the Veda', is S's explication. * See last verse of Ch. IV.

Let me know of a verity, O Lord, by what this universe is manifested, by what it is supported, by what it is created, into what it merges, by whom it is governed, and what it is in essence. Thou, being lord over what is, what shall be and what is just coming into being, knowest all this. Thou knowest the universe as well as one does an *āmla* fruit placed on the palm of his hand, Thy plenary knowledge giving Thee certainty. And tell me, first, what is the source of Thine own knowledge, Who is Thy support, on Whom art Thou dependent, and what is Thy essential nature. Thou createst single-handed all creatures out of the elements by means of Thy power of *Māyā*. Thou protectest them, and sustaineest them in Thyself; utilizing Thine own power without any detriment to Thyself and without the least fatigue, Thou createst them even as the spider does its web. I do not think that there is anything in this universe, be it superior, inferior or common, gross or subtle, and distinguished by names, forms or qualities, which can come out of aught else but Thee. Still Thou confoundest us by reason of the fact that Thou, with the utmost deliberation, didst perform the severest austerities, thus causing doubts in our minds whether there might not be some one else who is greater than Thee. O Omniscient Lord that rulest over all, let me know clearly, so that I may fully understand from Thy teaching, the answers to all those questions that I have asked' (1-8).

Brahmā replied, 'You have done well, my son, to ask these questions voicing your doubts. They are surely prompted by compassion; for they do me a kindness. You have induced me to descant on the glories of the exalted Lord, my child. Even what you have said of me cannot be said to be untrue, since¹ you do not know that there is One higher than I, from Whom I derive all these powers that you attribute to me. Let us contemplate with reverence in our hearts on Him, the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Self-luminous One, by Whom is manifested the universe, which I then make explicit, even as the sun, the moon, the planets, the constellations and the stars do. It is His invincible

¹ (*alt.*) Read here, 'all these powers are in me' and

Māyā that makes men call me the cause of the worlds' coming into being. Confounded by her (Māyā) who is too shamefaced to show herself in His presence, men whose understandings are clouded speak in terms of 'me' and 'mine'. There is in truth no object, O Brahman—neither substance, nor *karma*, time, innate disposition or *jīva*—beyond, or other than Vāsudeva. The Vedas derive from Narayana, the gods are born of His limbs, the worlds of enjoyment are dependent upon His will, the sacrifices are for His propitiation, the *yogic* disciplines, austerities, enlightenment, and its fruit (liberation) are all dependent on Narayana. Created and prompted by His will, I create the world, which is really His creation, for He is the Witness, the Inner Ruler, the unchanging and immovable principle, the Soul in all that is. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the three *guṇas* that derive from the Supreme Lord, Who is Himself unconditioned, and they are utilized by Him, through Māyā, in the work of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. They, implicit as their cause in the gross elements, the senses and the gods, bind the *jīva*—who, though in truth ever free, is under the control of Māyā—to the complex of body, senses and mind, by making him identify himself with them. That self-same Lord Adhokshaja, Who is but imperfectly apprehended from these three differentiae (the *guṇas*) of the *jīva*, is the Ruler of all, including myself, O Brahman (9-20).

He, the Lord of Māyā, desiring to manifest Himself as many through the instrumentality of that power of His, utilized for this purpose time, action, and innate disposition which, by His own free will, He mobilized within Himself. The disturbance of the *guṇas* in the Mahat was brought about by time, change by innate disposition, and birth as the result of past *karma*, all these happening as the Lord willed. From Mahat, constituted predominantly of *rajas* and *sattva*, arose that ego, which was predominantly constituted of *tamas* and was of the nature of substance, intelligence and activity.¹ And this, known as *Ahamkāra* (ego), under-

¹ These refer respectively, to the gross elements, the gods and the organs (S.)

going modification, changed into three different entities, *Vaikārika* (otherwise known as *Sāttvika*), *Taijasa* (*Rājasa*), and *Tāmasa*—these having the power to produce the gods who control the senses, the senses themselves, and the gross elements respectively, O capable one. From *Tāmasa-ahamkāra* arose *ākāśa*; sound is its subtle form and distinguishing characteristic, by which the seer and the seen are indicated. From *ākāśa*, as it underwent modification, arose air, whose differentia is touch; because of its association with *ākāśa*, its origin, air is characterized by sound also. And it is the sustainer of the body as the life-breath, and the source of the energy of the senses, of the mind and of the body. And from air, as it was modified by time, *karma* and innate disposition, arose fire, which has the peculiar attribute of colour, as well as the properties of touch and sound. From fire as it was modified arose water, with the special property of taste, and it had the qualities of colour, touch and sound as well, by reason of its association with all the foregoing. From water as it was modified arose earth, known also as “*Viśeṣa*”,¹ with its special characteristic, smell; and by its association with the others, it had taste, touch, sound and colour as well (21-29).

‘From the *Vaikārika* (*Sāttvika*) *ahamkāra* arose the mind (and the moon). The ten other gods, who were evolved from the *Vaikārika-ahamkāra*, are (first) the deities of the four quarters, the wind-god, the sun, *Prachetas* (*Varuṇa*), and the *Aśvin* twins, and (secondly) the god of fire, *Indra*, *Upendra*, *Mitra* and *Dakṣa* (*Prajāpati*). From the *Taijasa-ahamkāra*, as it was modified, arose the ten organs of sensation and action. Since the intellect with its power of cognizing and the life-breath with its power of action, are the products of *Taijasa-ahamkāra*, the ten organs (of sensation and action)—the ears, the skin, the nose, the eyes, and the organ of taste (the tongue), as well as the organ of speech, the arms, the feet, the penis and the anus—are also its products (30-31).

‘So long as these entities, the elements, the senses, the mind, and the *guṇas*, remained uncombined, O foremost

¹ Because it has the attributes of all the other elements as well.

of the knowers of the Brahma, they were powerless to fashion the body. So they combined in varying proportions, some more some less, under the prompting of the power of the Lord, and thus created both (the cosmic egg and the individual body). At the end of thousands of years, the Supreme Soul (the Paramātmān), utilising time, action and innate disposition, imparted life (consciousness) to the egg that lay in the water lifeless. He Himself, the Supreme Lord, emerged from the egg, breaking it, as the Purusha, with thousands of thighs, feet, arms, eyes, faces and heads (30-35).

‘Men of wisdom conceive the world as fashioned from His limbs, the lower seven worlds out of the part of the body from the loins downwards, the upper seven from the hip and above. The Brahmana issued from the mouth of the Purusha, the Kshattriya from His arms; from the thighs of the Lord was born the Vaiśya, and from the feet the Sūdra. The earth (and the seven lower worlds) was conceived of as fashioned from His lower limbs, the feet and so on, up to the waist; the empyrean from His navel, heaven from the heart, and the Mahar-loka from the chest of the Supreme Lord; the Jana-loka from His neck, the Tapo-loka from His two breasts, and from His heads the Satya-loka. But the Brahmaloka (Vaikuntha) has existed eternally. The Atala is regarded as fashioned from the loins, the Vitala from the thighs of the Omnipresent Lord, the holy Sutala from His knee, the Talātala from His shanks, the Mahātala from His ankles, the Rasātala from His forefeet and the Pātāla from the soles of His feet. Thus is the Purusha conceived of as having a body consisting of all the worlds. Another way of regarding the worlds, conceived of as three, is to think of the Bhūloka as having been fashioned from His feet, of the Bhuvar-loka from His navel, and the Svar-loka from His head’ (36-42).

CHAPTER VI

BRAHMĀ ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SACRIFICE

Brahmā continued : ' From His mouth came the organ of speech and the god of fire¹ ; from the seven constituents of His body the seven Vedic metres ; from His tongue the food of the gods, of the manes and of man, as well as all kinds of taste. His nostrils are the supreme source of all vital airs and of the wind-god ; His sense of smell, of the *Āśvins*, of all herbage and all fragrant odours, ordinary and special. From His faculty of vision came the colours, and the lights that manifest them ; in His eyeballs were located heaven and the sun ; in His ears the four quarters and the sacred waters ; and from His faculty of hearing derived *ākāśa* and sound. His body was the source of all that is best in everything, and of all loveliness ; His skin was the source of the sense of touch and of *Vāyu* (who presides over the sense of touch)², as well as of all sacrifices. From the hair on His body sprang all trees, or perhaps, only those that are of use in the sacrifice. The hair on His head, His beard and moustaches, and His nails were the source, respectively, of the clouds, of lightning, and of stone and iron. From His arms came the Guardians of the worlds, who are mostly engaged in the work of protection. The earth, the upper air and heaven rest on His three footsteps. The feet of Hari are the haven of security, the sanctuary from peril, the dispenser of all boons. The Lord's organ of generation was the source of the waters, of the seminal fluid, and of creation, and the birth-place of the god of rain and of the Progenitor. His sex faculty was the source of the supreme satisfaction that results from coition for the sake of progeny. His faculty of evacuation was the birthplace of *Yama* and *Mitra* and the source of our

¹ S. thus explains : ' His mouth is the origin of the faculty of speech of the like of us, and of the god of fire, its controller. ' In all that follows, it should be understood that the appropriate organ (of the like of us) and the deity presiding over it derive from the member of the *Virāt* mentioned; thus from his tongue derive flavours, our sense of taste and *Varuṇa*. ² This *Vāyu* is different from the wind-god.

faculty of excretion, O Nārada ; while His anus is spoken of as the source of violence, ill-luck, death and hell ; and His back as the source of defeat, unrighteousness and ignorance. From His veins and arteries originated the streams that flow west and those that flow east ; and from His skeleton the mountains. The enlightened speak of His belly as the source of the salt and other oceans, of the essence of food and of Pradhāna, and as the place of dissolution of all creatures. And His heart was the source of the mind. The *chitta* of the Lord was the supreme abode of Dharma as well as the place of origin of Me, of yourself, of the immortal boy-sages, of Bhava (Rudra), of intelligence and of the *Sattva-guṇa* (1-11).

‘I, yourself, the Lord Bhava, these sages, your elder brothers, the gods, the Asuras, men, the elephants, the birds, the deer, and the reptiles, the Gandharvas, the Apsarases, the Yakshas, the Rākshasas, the hosts of elementals, the serpents, the domestic animals, the manes, the adepts, the Vidyādhara, the Chāraṇas, the trees and all the infinite variety of creatures living in water, on land or in the firmament, the planets, the stars, the comets and other lesser lights, lightning, thunder—all this that is, was or is yet to be, is none other than the Purusha Himself. By Him is the earth encompassed, and He passes beyond it by a span’s length¹. Just as the sun, while lighting up its own orb, illumines all the space beyond, so does the Purusha light up the body of the Viraj (cosmic Purusha) and also illumine the cosmic egg both within and without. Being beyond the reach of the consequences of *karma* that lead from death to death, He dispenses that immortality (*moksha*) which excludes fear ; and in this lies the unique and measureless greatness of the Purusha, O Brahman. All creatures are regarded as living in worlds that are but fractions of Him (being like His feet). In the three worlds, which are above the one (Mahar-loka) which is on top of the lower three worlds, the earth, the empyrean and heaven, are laid up immortality, secure felicity and liberation respectively. The worlds to which go those

¹ ‘This has no literal significance ; all that is meant is that the Lord surpasses the earth. He is infinitely vaster.’ (S)

who belong to the *āśramas* which do not lead to rebirth—those of the celibate student, the forest hermit and the *sannyāsin*—are above the three worlds (Bhūr, Bhuvah and Suvah); while the other order, that is, the one to which belongs the householder, who is not vowed to lifelong celibacy, is kept within the confines of the three worlds (12-19).

'The Purusha (Kshetraja) treads the two paths,¹ the one leading to enjoyments and the other to liberation; since the former concerns itself with the performance of *karma* from nescience, while the latter dedicates itself to the devotion that results in knowledge. The Supreme Lord is the support of both. He (the Supreme Purusha), from Whom originated the cosmic egg, and the cosmic body which it contained and which was constituted of the elements, the organs of sense and action and the objects thereof, enveloped and surpassed² that body and that egg, and passing beyond them shone like the sun that lights up the universe (as well as its own orb) (20-21).

'When I appeared in the lotus that had sprung from the navel of the Supreme Lord, the Inner Ruler of the Viraj, and found no materials for sacrifice other than the limbs of the Purusha, it was from those limbs that I collected all the materials needed—the animals to be offered up as sacrifice, the trees for sacrificial stakes, and *kūśa* grass, this sacrificial ground here ready prepared, the season which is eminently propitious, the utensils and other such things, grain, oils, liquids of different tastes, metals, earth, water, the Rk. and Yajus *mantras* and the Sāman hymns, the four priestly functions, the designations of the different sacrifices, the *mantras* such as 'Svāhā', the fees and the vows to be taken, the order in which the gods are to be invoked, the manuals of ritual, the resolution to offer the sacrifice, the procedure, the movements such as the *Vishnu-krama*, the meditations, the devoutness of application, the expiatory rites and the dedication of all fruits to the Lord. With the materials from the body of the Purusha, which I thus collected, I worshipped the Purusha Himself, the

¹ 'The Northern and the Southern' (S); 'the Dhūma and the Archirādi' (R.) ² That is, He was distinct from the cosmic body.

Supreme Lord, the Lord of the sacrifice, by offering Him the sacrifice. Then these brothers of yours, the nine patriarchs, worshipped with collected minds the Supreme Lord Who is essentially unmanifest, but is manifest in such deities as Indra. Then the various Manus and others, the sages, the manes, the gods, the Asuras and men worshipped the all-pervading Lord with sacrifices, each in his time (22-29).

‘The universe has for its base and support the exalted Lord Narayana, Who is in His essence unlimited by the *guṇas* and takes to Himself, at the beginning of creation, numberless attributes through His power of *Māyā*, It is by His command that I create the universe; and Hara (Śiva), obeying His will, destroys it; and He Himself, the Wielder of the three powers of *Māyā*, protects the universe in the form of Vishnu (30-31).

‘And now, my child, I have answered the question you asked. There is nothing whatever in the world of cause and effect, which is other than the exalted Lord. My words are never tainted by untruth, my dear, neither are my thoughts, nor do my senses stray into evil paths. For, with a heart melting with love, I always think of Hari. Though I was ever immersed in the study of the Vedas and zealous in the practice of austerities, and though I was honoured by the patriarchs as their great chief, I could not find out who my parent was, in spite of my endeavouring with all earnestness to do so by the practice of yoga with all its ancillary disciplines. I bow my head at those feet of His which snap the bonds of *samsāra* for those who take refuge in Him, which confer all blessings, and which it is ever a delight to serve. When He Himself does not know the extent of His power of *Māyā*, even as the sky does not know its own limits, how could others? When neither I nor you nor Vāmadeva (Rudra) know Him in His essence, how should other gods? Deluded by His *Māyā*, we see only this universe brought into existence by it, and that too only to the extent our mental grasp reaches. Salutations to the exalted Lord Whose incarnations and exploits the like of us extol but Whom in truth we do not know (32-37).

‘It is the self-same, the First Cause, Who knows no

birth, that creates in Kalpa after Kalpa, as the Purusha incarnate, Himself in Himself and through Himself, and likewise protects and destroys. It is pure Consciousness and Truth, the innermost Self in all, securely established, perfect, without beginning or end, unconditioned and eternal, being the One without a second. The contemplatives, when their bodies, senses and minds are in a state of serene quietude, perceive this Reality, O sage, but It disappears from view when men's minds are distracted by the specious logic of the wicked (38-40).

'The first incarnation of the transcendent Lord, Who is supremely great, is the Purusha (the activator of Prakṛti). Time, innate disposition, Prakṛti (as cause and effect), the Mahat, the gross elements, the ego, the three *guṇas*, the senses, the cosmic body, the cosmic Purusha, all creatures, stationary and moving; myself, (Brahmā), Bhava (Rudra), Yajna (Vishnu), these patriarchs (Dakṣha and the rest), yourself and other devotees; the rulers of heaven, of the worlds of birds and men and of the nether regions; the rulers of the Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, and Chāraṇas, of the Yakshas, Rākshasas, Nāgas and Uragas; the great sages, the rulers of the Daityas, the chiefs of the Siddhas and of the Dānavas; others such as the Lords of the spirits of the departed, of goblins, elementals and evil spirits, of the monsters of the deep, of the birds and the beasts; whatever in short exists, endowed with outstanding power, energy, vigour of mind and of the senses, capability, forbearance, splendour, sensitive aversion to wrong-doing, good fortune and intelligence, and a marvellous complexion, and having a form or having no form—all such are but expressions of the Supreme Reality, O sage (41-44).

'And now I shall describe to you in due order those beautiful incarnations made in play by the Lord Who is supremely great, which men of wisdom regard as the principal ones, and which remove such evil as may have lodged in the ears of those who drink in with their ears their charming tale' (45).

CHAPTER VII

THE TWENTY-FOUR INCARNATIONS

Brahmā said: 'When Ananta (Vishnu), taking the form of a boar, which was the sum and symbol of all sacrifices, engaged in the task of lifting up the earth, He tore with His tusk, as the Wielder of the thunderbolt did the mountains, that ancient Asura (Hiranyāksha) whom He encountered in the depths of the ocean. Born as Suyajna, the son of Ruchi by Ākūti, He begot on His wife Dakshinā the gods known as Suyāmas. When He put an end to the terrible distress of the three worlds, He was re-named Hari by Svāyambhuva Manu. Born in the house of Kardama as his son by his wife Devahūti along with nine girls, He, O Brahman, imparted the knowledge of the Brahmā to His mother; by means of which she washed herself clean, in this life, of the taint that clings to the mind in the form of attachment to the products of the *guṇas*, and attained the state of Kapila (*moksha*). Pleased with Atri, the Lord told him, who desired a son, "I have given even myself to you", and He was known as Datta; purified by the dust of whose lotus feet, the Yadus, Haihayas and others obtained the powers of yoga which brought them all enjoyments in this world as well as *moksha*. As the fruit of the unintermittent austerities that I practised (at the very beginning of the present *Kalpa*) from the desire to create the worlds, He appeared as the four eternally young sages whose names begin with the word "Sana". And He so well imparted to the sages (who waited on these) the truth of the Self, which had been lost in the Deluge that ended the previous *Kalpa*, that they forthwith vividly realized it in their minds. He was born as Nara and Narayana (the twins), of Mūrti, Daksha's daughter, and possessed a prowess that was unique; the goddesses, who form the army of the god of love, seeing women who were their very spit and image emerge from the Lord, realized that He had foiled their mission, which was to make Him violate His vows. Those others who have achieved perfection are, as is well known, able to burn the god of love by an angry look¹; but even they cannot burn up that wrath itself,

¹ An oblique reference to Rudra.

though it burn them ever so fiercely. How can lust find lodgement in His pure mind when fear (anger) itself is afraid of entering it? (1-7)

'When Dhruva, struck to the heart by the verbal darts of his stepmother in the presence of the King, betook himself to the forest, child though he was, to practise austerities, the Lord, pleased with him, who extolled Him, elevated him to that seat which eternally abides, and whose glory is sung by the celestial sages above (the Dhruva) and (the sages) below. Having saved, at the request of the sages, Vena, who had violated the norms of Dharma and was about to fall into hell, his prowess and good fortune burnt up by the verbal thunderbolt of the Brahmanas' curse, He was known in this world as His son (Pṛthu); and it was he that made the earth yield all its treasure. He (the Lord) was incarnate as R̥shabha, son of Nābhi, by Sudevi¹. Having renounced all attachments and quieted the senses and the mind, he was established in the Bliss of the Self, and looking with an equal eye on all, engaged in uninterrupted *yogic* contemplation, while conducting himself to all outward appearance like an inanimate object, which the sages describe as the state natural to the Paramahamsas. And He, the Lord of the sacrifice, was Himself present at the sacrifice I offered, taking a form with the head of a horse, and of a golden complexion. As He Who is the embodiment of the Vedas and of all sacrifices, Who is all the gods and their Inner Ruler too, breathed, the exhalations resolved themselves into the auspicious words of the Vedas. At the time of the dissolution of the universe, He appeared to Manu as the Great Fish and supported the earth and was the stay and prop of all lives; and rescuing the Vedas that had slipped down from my mouth, He sported in the dread waters of the Deluge. In the milky ocean, when the leaders of the gods and the Asuras churned it for obtaining nectar, He, the First of the gods, taking the form of a tortoise, bore the mountain on His back, welcoming the prospect of sleep following relief from itch, by the scratching of the revolving mountain. To dispel the terror of the gods, He took the form of a man-

¹ Also known as Meru Devi.

lion, whose face was dreadful, with its twitching brow and fierce tusks. He threw across His thigh the Lord of the Asuras, who had approached Him with his uplifted mace, and swiftly tore him with His claws, as he writhed in agony (8-14).

‘When the leader of the elephant herd, gripped by the leg in the lake by the terrible alligator, cried out in distress, holding a lotus in his trunk, “O Primordial Lord, Protector of all the worlds, Whose glory purifies, Whose name falls as a benediction on the ear !”, Hari, the exalted Lord of the measureless puissance was there the moment He heard that cry for succour, riding on the back of the King of the birds. And slashing the mouth of the alligator with the discus, He compassionately rescued him, catching hold of his trunk and lifting him up (15-16).

‘The Lord Who presides over the sacrifice, though the youngest¹ of the sons of Aditi, was by virtue of His qualities the foremost of them. He traversed the three worlds with His strides immediately after He had got the earth by the ruse of begging for just three steps, taking the form of a dwarf (Vāmana). For the man who keeps to the path of virtue should not be cast down from his place even by the almighty powers except by begging of him. The rulership of heaven was held of little account by Bali, who had sprinkled all over his head the water that had washed the feet of Him of the mighty strides ; he would not do except as he had promised, and he gladly offered his own body, my dear, to Hari with bowed head (17-18).

‘And to you, O Nārada, the Lord, who was pleased to see your heart melting with love for Him, gave full instruction in the yoga of devotion, imparting, too, that key to self-knowledge, the *Bhāgavatam*, which is itself the truth and the lamp that lights up the Self, and which those who seek refuge in Vāsudeva understand easily (19).

‘In the different Manvantaras, He, as the Manu of that cycle and the Protector of the line of Manus, exhibits in all the ten directions His prowess which, like His own discus, knows no check, and which chastises

¹ In His incarnation as Vāmana. He was later appointed Upendra (which means Indra’s Deputy).

wicked kings, and by these and other similar exploits spreads His fame even in that world (Satya-loka) which is on top of the three worlds. Incarnate as Dhanvantari, He, Who is fame itself, removes the sufferings of victims of dire diseases at the mere mention of His name and propagates the science that teaches the secret of long life. He, who can bestow the life that knows no death, got His share in the sacrifice, which had long been withheld (20-21).

‘With His axe of the long and razor-sharp edge the mighty soul (Paraśurāma), fierce in His strength, uprooted thrice seven times the Kshatriya race, which had been marked for destruction and handed over by fate to death, since, in its hatred of the Brahmanas, it had fallen away from the path of Dharma, hankering after the tortures of hell, and was proving a thorn in the side of the world (22).

‘He, the Lord of Māyā, deigning to bestow His grace on us, was incarnate in the House of Ikshvāku (as Rama), along with His *amśas*, and obeying the behest of His father entered the forest along with his wife and younger brother ; provoking His enmity, the ten-headed Rāvaṇa met his doom. For Him, who wanted instantly to burn up like Hara the city of the foe, the ocean, quaking with fear, made a passage, when a glance from His eye, red with anger at the thought of His far-away beloved, caused its world of *makaras*, serpents and crocodiles to burn in its boiling waters. With the mere twanging of His bow, He would soon be quenching the laughter of his wife’s abductor along with his life, even as the latter moved proudly between the contending armies—he who dominated the four quarters, which were lit up by the brightness of the tusks¹ of Mahendra’s mount, which had shivered to bits on his chest (and remained stuck there) (23-25).

‘Born with a fraction of Himself to remove the sufferings of the earth burdened with the armies of the Kings, who are incarnations of the foes of the gods, the Lord, Who has both black and white hair, will perform exploits that proclaim His glory, though men’s minds are baffled

¹ S’s rendering is, ‘The broken bits of tusks... that had fallen in the different quarters.’

in their efforts to know Him truly. Unless He were the Supreme Lord Himself, how could He, as a babe in arms, slay Pootanā, or as a three-month-old child upset the cart? How could He, crawling on His knees and hands, uproot the twin *arjuna* trees that reached up to the skies, by getting between them? He will restore to life, His eyes dropping grace, the cows and the cowherds of Vraja who had drunk of the poisoned water. And to cleanse the pool, He will drive away from it, as He sports in its waters, the virulently poisonous serpent (Kāliya) with its tongues constantly flicking. The world will regard it as a superhuman feat of His, Whose power none may gauge, when with Bala He leads the inhabitants of Vraja to safety out of the forest, asking them to close their eyes, as they, who have been sleeping soundly, find themselves surrounded by a summer fire that breaks out at midnight, and conclude that their last hour on earth is come. It will be no less a marvel that every cord with which His mother tries to tie Him up should prove too short, or that the Gopi should see all the worlds in His mouth as He yawns, leaving her incredulous till the truth dawns upon her (26-30).

‘He will rescue Nanda from the dread noose of Varuṇa, and the cowherds immured in the cave by the son of Maya. He will lead to Vaikuntha the people of Gokula who, having been busy all day long, would be sunk in slumber at night. When the god (Indra) sends down torrential rains to drown Vraja, because the cowherds have stopped his worship, the seven-year-old child, compassionately wishing to protect the cows, will playfully hold aloft for seven days the mountain on one tireless hand as if it were a mushroom. As at night He diverts Himself in the forest, white with the flooding rays of the moon, looking forward to the Rāsa dance and kindling the fever of love in the breasts of the belles of Vraja with the sweet words and the long-drawn dulcet notes of his melodious song, He will lop off the head of the retainer of Kubera, who attempts to carry them off. Pralamba, the ass, the crane (Dardura-Baka), Keśi, Arishta, the wrestlers, the tusker (Kūvalayāpīda), Kamsa, the Yavana, Kuja (Naraka), Poundraka and the like; Sālva, the ape (Dvīvida), Balvala, Dantavaktra,

the seven bulls, Sambara, Vidūratha, Rukmi, and their followers; those warriors praised for their prowess in battle, the Kambhojas, Kurus, Kaikayas, Sṛñjayas, and the others who have joined in the fray with drawn bows—all these shall assuredly reach His abode, which is beyond mortal ken, thanks to the acts of Hari masquerading under the names of Bala, Pārtha and Bhīma (31-35).

‘Realising how impossible it is for men who are short-lived, and whose intelligence continually deteriorates in *yuga* after *yuga* with the passage of time, and is inadequate to cope with the boundless ocean of His commandments (the Veda), He will, when incarnate as the son of Satyavati, divide the Veda into many branches. When the enemies of the gods, while firm in their adherence to the Veda, begin to harry the worlds, riding in city-like vehicles devised by Maya, which move with imperceptible swiftness, He (as Buddha) will disguise Himself as a heretic, so as to make them lose their faith in the Veda and fall to the lure of other faiths, and widely propagate such heretical doctrines. At the end of the *yuga*, when even in the houses of good men the tales of the glories of Hari are no longer heard, when the twice-born have all turned heretics, and Sūdras are kings, when the words “Svāhā”, “Svadhā,” “Vashat” are not so much as heard, the Lord will Himself be born as (Kalki) the scourge of Kali (36-38).

‘Austerities (contemplation), Myself (Brahmā), the nine sages, the patriarchs—these are the forms assumed by the Lord of the infinite puissance, employing the qualities of Māyā for the purpose of the work of creation; Dharma, the sacrifice (Vishnu), the Manus, the gods and the rulers of men, are the forms He takes for the work of preservation; while Adharma, Hara (Rudra), serpents, Asuras and so on, are the forms assumed for the work of destruction. What man of genius, even if he had reckoned the atoms that compose the earth, could sum up the prowess of Vishnu, Who supported all the worlds from the Pradhāna up to the Satyaloka, when they reeled and might have tumbled down under the impetuous sweep of His foot? I do not know, neither do these sages here, who were here before you, the extent

or limit of the strength of the Purusha's power of Māyā ; how then should others, seeing that even the primordial Lord Sesha, extolling His qualities with all his thousand tongues, is nowhere within sight of the end ? (39-41).

'Those on whom the Lord that knows no end bestows His grace because they put their sincere trust in Him and cleave with might and main to His feet—it is they that pass beyond His power of Māyā. Such men do not entertain the notions of "Me" and "Mine" towards what might become the food of dogs and jackals. I know the Lord's Yoga-Māyā ; and so do you, my dear, as well as the Lord Bhava, the greatest of the Asuras (Prahlaḍa), the wife of Manu (Satarūpā), Manu himself, his children, Prāchīnabarhis, Ribhu, Anga, Dhruva, Ikshvāku, Aila (Purūras), Muchukunda, Videha (Janaka), Gādhī, Raghu, Ambarisha, Sagara, Gaya, the son of Nahusha (Yayāti), and others. Māndhātā, Alarka, Satadhanu, Aṇu, Rantideva, Devavrata, Bali, Amūrtaraya, Dilīpa, Soubhari, Uttanka, Sibi, Devala, Pippalāda, Sārasvata, Uddhava, Parāśara, Bhūriṣeṇa, and others, chief among whom are Vibhīṣeṇa, Hanumān, Suka¹, Pārtha, Ārṣhtīṣeṇa, Vidura and Srutadeva—these too know the Lord's Māyā. Why, even women, Sūdras, Hūṇas, and those, such as Sabaras, who are born among classes addicted to sin, and also the lower creatures, know and pass beyond the reach of the Lord's Māyā, if they cultivate the disposition of those who are devoted to Him of the marvellous strides ; what doubt then could there be of those doing so, who can retain and profit by the teaching that they have heard ? (42-46).

'That is the essential form of the Lord, which the sages know as the Brahmā ; It is eternal Bliss untouched by sorrow, the Home of absolute peace, where fear is unknown, as there is no sense of difference ; It is pure knowledge, beyond cause and effect ; It is identical with the Self, and not to be achieved by the action of different agents ; and Māyā flees It, ashamed as it were to look It in the face. When they have succeeded in anchoring their minds in the Brahmā, aspirants to liberation forthwith discard the means by which they

¹ V. interprets 'Upendraḍatta' as 'Parīkṣit'.

get rid of the sense of difference, even as Indra (the rain-god) has no use for the spade used to dig wells. (Until this consummation is achieved) it is the Lord Himself Who dispenses the fruits of action, as from Him originates the phenomenal world resulting from the modification of the principles (Mahat and the rest). When the body dies, on the dispersal of the elements of which it is built, the *jīva*, who really knows no birth and who is like space within it, does not perish with it (47-49).

‘And now I have told you in brief, my son, of the exalted Lord, the Creator of the universe. There is nothing in it, whether cause or effect, other than Hari, Who however is different from it all. This, which I have expounded to you, is called the *Bhāgavatam*, because it was imparted to me by the Lord, and it is a compendious statement of His glorious attributes. You should expand it. Consider well and expound it in such a way as to induce men to give their devotion to the Lord Hari, the Soul and Support of all. The mind of the man who, constantly and with faith, recounts the *Māyā* (pastimes) of the exalted Lord, as well as the mind of him who listens devoutly to the tale, or of him who applauds it, never succumbs to *Māyā* (illusion)’ (50-53).

CHAPTER VIII

THE TOPICS OF THE BHĀGAVATAM

The King asked : ‘ Bidden by Brahmā to tell of the glories of the Lord Who transcends the *guṇas*, who were the persons to whom, O Brahman, Nārada of the godlike vision spoke of them, and what did he say to each one of them ? I wish, O foremost of the knowers of the Veda, to know this of a truth. Chronicle, O blessed one, the tales of Hari of the marvellous exploits, which confer all auspiciousness on the worlds ; so that I may be enabled to discard the body, fixing the mind, freed from all attachments, on Krishna, the soul in all beings. When a man hears constantly and attentively the accounts of His exploits and extols them, the Lord enters his heart

ere long. Entering the lotus that is the heart of His devotee, through the orifice of the ear, the Lord purifies it of all taint, even as the autumn does the waters. The purified soul, freed from all fever and fret,¹ never abandons the feet of Krishna, even as the returned wanderer does not leave home again (1-6).

‘Tell me, O Brahman—for you, without a doubt, know the truth—whether the *jīva*, who has nothing in common with the elements, came to be invested with a body composed of them by pure chance, or whether it was due to some antecedent cause. He (Īśvara), from Whose navel sprang the lotus, which represents the form and physical disposition of the three worlds, has been described as possessing a body with a specified number of limbs disposed in a particular way, even as the ordinary mortal does, though the latter’s limbs are limited in size. But it has also been said that it was by His grace that Aja (Brahmā) who, born of His navel, is the controller of all creatures, created them, and it was by His grace that he had been permitted to see His form. Where does He, the Purusha, the Master of Māyā, Who is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, and Who dwells in the hearts of all creatures, lie down, when He desists from employing (His power of) Māyā? Then, it has been said that in the beginning, the worlds as well as their Guardians were created out of the limbs of the Purusha. But you have also said that from the worlds and their Guardians the Purusha’s limbs were fashioned (7-11).

‘How long does a *Kalpa* last, and how long a *Vikalpa*? How is time known? What do the terms “Past”, “Present” and “Future”, denote? What is the term of life of different creatures? How does the perception of the duration of time, long or short, arise? What are the goals which may be won by *karma*, and what are their characteristics, O best of Brahmanas? Among the *jīvas* who desire the fruits of the *guṇas* (such as birth as a god, a man, and so on) what desired result is obtained by each, and as the result of what complex of good and bad *karmas*? And if the consequences are different according to the manner in which such *Karmas*

¹ Due to likes and dislikes etc.

are done, how do they differ? How do the nether regions, the four quarters, the sky, the planets, the constellations, the mountains, the rivers, the seas and the islands and the creatures that inhabit them, come into existence? What are the dimensions of the cosmic egg inside and outside? (12-15).

‘Please recount, too, the life-histories of the great, and the distinguishing traits of the *varṇas* and the *āśramas*, the number and names of the *yugas*, their duration, the *dharma* appropriate to each *yuga*, and the story of the incarnations of Hari in each *yuga*, especially of the most marvellous among them. What is the *dharma* common to all men, what the special *dharma*s? What are the codes that govern different occupations, the sage-kings (as rulers), and those who are in difficulties? The tally of the Sankhyan categories, and the description of them according to their nature and functions, the modes of worship of the Supreme Lord, and the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*; the worlds to which the master-yogis gain access by virtue of the supernatural powers they acquire; the way in which the yogis compass the destruction of their subtle bodies; the characteristics of the Vedas and the Upa-Vedas, the Dharma Sāstras, the Itihāsas and the Purāṇas; the manner of creation, preservation and destruction of all creatures; the rules governing sacrificial and other Vedic rites, and those governing charities and works of public utility, including those done with a view to the fruits thereof, and the proper pursuit of the three ends of life; the birth of the *jīvas*, whose subtle bodies (limiting adjuncts) have been quiescent during the dissolution of the universe; the rise of heretical beliefs; the bondage and the liberation of the *jīva*, and his native state; how the Lord, Who acts of His own free will, diverts Himself with His own Māyā, or laying aside that power, the Omnipresent Lord remains a passive Witness—all this which I, who have taken refuge in you, am anxious to know, you should explain in due order and with all exactness. For in these matters you can speak with as much authority as the supreme Overlord of the creators, Brahmā, born of the Paramātmā; others merely follow what has been done from the immemorial past. As long as I drink

in the nectar of Achyuta's glories, O Brahman, I shall not, though I starve, die (or become incapable of profiting by your instruction) till, that is, the Brahmana's curse does its work' (16-26).

The Sūta said : Thus requested by the King Vishnu-rāta (Parikshit) in the assembly to tell the story of Hari, the One Existent, Overlord and Master, Brahmarāta (Suka) was greatly pleased; and he expounded the *Bhāgavatam*, which is venerated as much as the Veda itself, and which the Lord had communicated to Brahmā at the very beginning of the Brāhma-Kalpa. He proceeded to answer one by one all the questions that Parikshit, the great scion of the Pāndus, had asked (27-29).

CHAPTER IX

THE FOUR-VERSE BHĀGAVATAM

Srī Suka said : But for the illusion produced by the Māyā of the Paramātmā (Hari), it will be seen that there is no more connection between the *jīva*—who is of the nature of consciousness, and different from the objective world—and the body, than there is between the dreamer and his dream-body. As the result of Māyā manifesting itself in many forms,¹ the *jīva*, by association with those manifestations, seems multifold; and delighting in the products² of the *guṇas* of Māyā, he thinks in terms of 'Me' and 'Mine'.³ But when he comes to find all joy in his essential glory (the Brahmā) Which is beyond time and Māyā, he is freed from delusion, and ridding himself of the notions of 'Me' and 'Mine', is established in the plenary Self (1-3).

I shall now tell you what the exalted Lord, pleased with his earnest austerities, told Brahmā about the means of knowing the real nature of the Self, while at the same time revealing to him His true form compact of pure intelligence. Brahmā, the first of the gods, the foremost

¹ Such different bodies as those of gods, men, and so on.

² i.e. the body, which the *jīva* has entered, as well as the world of the senses. ³ The *jīva* identifies himself with the body as 'Me' and with the outside world as 'Mine'.

of the teachers of wisdom, settling down in his own home, meditated on how he should set about the task of creation. But the unerring intuitive knowledge he sought, as to how he should proceed with the work of creation of the world, eluded him. As he was pondering on this, the capable one heard, uttered twice, close to him on the waters, the word (*tapa*) composed of two letters, the sixteenth and the twenty-first among the consonants, which signifies, O King, what those who have abjured all possessions look upon as their wealth. On hearing that word, he looked about him, wishing to see the speaker. But seeing no one else about, he seated himself again in his place, and made up his mind to practise austerities, as if he had been instructed by somebody in this behalf; for he realized that doing so would be for his own good. With unerring insight, he, who excelled all other ascetics in austerity, and who had won control over the breath, the mind and the two sets of organs, steadily engaged for a thousand celestial years in the practice of austerities, which brought him the power to make the worlds manifest (4-8).

Propitiated by his austerities, the exalted Lord revealed to him His own world (Vaikuntha), which is higher than all the rest, and higher than which there is none; that world where there is neither suffering, delusion, nor fear, and which is extolled by the enlightened, who have realized the Self. There neither *rajas*, nor *tamas*, nor the *sattva* which has an admixture of those other *guṇas*, nor the destructive power of time, nor *Māyā* can prevail, not to speak of lesser things. Therein dwell the personal attendants of the Lord Hari, who receive the homage of gods and Asuras alike. They are dark-blue in complexion, and glow with their own splendour. Their eyes resemble the lotus. They are clad in yellow silks, and are comely, with limbs delicately formed. All of them have four arms; they are adorned with medallions and jewels set with sparkling gems of the first water. They are radiant, with the lustre of coral and cat's-eye and of the fibre of the lotus stalk, and they wear glittering ear-pendants, diadems and garlands. With its splendid array on all sides of aerial cars belonging to mighty souls, and the beauty of supremely lovely

women that lights it up, it shines like the sky with a bank of clouds on which lightning plays. There the Goddess Śrī of surpassing beauty worships with splendid offerings the feet of Him Who is extolled by the great; and she, to whom the followers of the vernal season sing as she sits on her swing, herself sings the exploits of her beloved Lord (9-13).

In that world he (Brahmā) beheld Him, the Protector of His devotees, the Consort of Śrī, the Lord of the sacrifice, the Master of the worlds, and Inner Ruler of all creatures; waited upon by Sunanda, Nanda, Prabala and Arhaṇa and others among His chief attendants. He was gracious to His servants, looking at them with a look that went to their heads like wine, and there played a charming smile on the face with its violet eyes. He wore a crown and ear-pendants and was clad in yellow silks; and on His breast He bore the mark of the Goddess Śrī. The Supreme Lord was seated on His magnificent throne, surrounded by His Powers, the four, the sixteen and the five¹; possessed of the supernatural attributes, which are innate to Him, but which are commanded by others only fortuitously; and finding all delight in His Own Self. His heart overflowing with joy on seeing Him, his body athrill, his eyes filling with the tears of love, the Creator of the worlds bowed at His feet, which are reached only by those who tread the path of the Paramahamsas. The Lord, Who was dear to Him, took him by the hand, being well pleased with him, who was intensely happy and who had come intent on the work of creation and was fully worthy of being instructed by Him in this behalf. And He spoke to him affectionately, His face lit up by a gentle smile (14-18).

The Lord said, 'I am well pleased with you, O Repository of the Veda, because of the austerities you have practised so long from the desire to undertake the task of creation. It is not possible for hypocrites who pass for yogis to propitiate Me. I am the Bestower of boons; ask of me what you will, O Brahman, and may all that is auspicious wait upon you. All efforts

¹ The 'four' are Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Mahat and Ahaṁkāra; the 'sixteen' are the ten organs, the mind and the five gross elements; the 'five' are the subtle elements.

that a man makes towards winning the highest good are consummated the moment he sets eyes on Me. It was I that designed that you should have this experience and obtain a glimpse of My world; it was on hearing the word uttered in private that you launched on these prime austerities. When you, confronted with your task, felt baffled, I addressed those words to you. Contemplation is none other than My inalienable puissance; while I am of its very essence, O flawless one. It is by rapt contemplation that I create the universe, and it is by contemplation that I then destroy it; and by contemplation I sustain it. My prowess lies in that intense contemplation which is exceedingly difficult to practise' (19-23).

Brahmā said, 'Exalted Lord, Thou as Inner Ruler and Director seated in the cave¹ of the heart, knowest by unerring intuition what all creatures have it in their minds to do. But still I beg of Thee, O Lord, our Protector, grant this wish of Thy suppliant—that I may have true knowledge of the gross and subtle forms of Thee That art in truth formless. Grant me, O Mādhava, the ability to understand how Thou, Lord of the resistless will, utilizing Thy power of Māyā, sustainest this universe constituted and developed by various powers, then destroyest and, likewise, createst it again, taking of Thy own free choice different forms (such as Brahmā and Rudra) and thus playest Thy play, even as the spider conceals itself behind its web; so that, while I unweariedly carry out Thy commandments and engage in the work of creation, I may by Thy grace escape falling into bondage.² So long as I, whom Thou hast honoured by treating me like a friend, remain engaged serenely doing Thy work, by creating men of every kind and degree, let me not succumb to overweening pride from the foolish notion that I am the independent Creator of the worlds' (24-29).

The Lord told him, 'You shall receive from Me now the knowledge that is the deepest of mysteries, and you shall also have direct experience thereof, and you shall learn, too, the secret that is at the heart of it as well as the means by which it may be made your own. By My

¹ 'The Buddhi' (S). ² 'To egoism, pride etc.' (S).

grace you shall know how great I am, what is the nature of my Being, what My forms, qualities and deeds are, and you shall likewise have intuitive knowledge of the truth (30-31).

'Before creation started, I alone was, nought else, neither gross, nor subtle nor the cause thereof; and I merely existed. Even after the coming into existence of the universe, I alone am¹, and I am this universe too, and when the worlds are dissolved, what remains is only Me. Know that to be My Māyā because of which something that baffles definition is seen as a phenomenal appearance in the Ātman like an optical illusion, while the real (the Ātman) is not seen, even as the node (Rāhu) is not seen among the planets.² Just as the gross elements have entered into all created things, gross and subtle, and yet have not entered them (that is, after their creation), even so I am in them and yet not in them. So far should he, who wants to know the truth of the Self, investigate as to ascertain what it is that exists everywhere and always, whether by itself or in conjunction with anything else; (for that is the Ātman) (32-35).

'Meditate on this truth constantly with one-pointed attention, and you shall never succumb to Māyā, while busying yourself with the multifold creations of every Kalpa' (36).

Srī Suka said : Having thus instructed the Overlord of all created beings, Hari, Who knows no birth, hid that form of His from view, even as he (Brahmā) was looking. Folding his hands in salutation to Hari, Who had withdrawn that visible form he, in whom were all creatures, created the universe as before³ (37-38).

Once upon a time, the Great Progenitor, the Protector of righteousness, practised the *yogic* disciplines, internal and external, with a view to ascertaining the best way of promoting the welfare of all creatures, which he had at heart. Nārada, the best-loved of his sons, diligently attended upon him, desiring to know the truth about Vishnu's Māyā; and the great sage and devotee of the Lord succeeded in propitiating his father by his virtuous

¹ 'In undiminished and eternal perfection.' ² The affirmation of the existence of Rāhu as a planet (though invisible) is a postulate of astrology. ³ In the previous *Kalpa*.

disposition, humility and self-control, O King. Seeing that his father, the Grandsire of the worlds, was pleased with him, the celestrial sage reverently asked him the same question as you have asked me. The Creator, pleased with his son, imparted to him knowledge of the *Bhāgavatam*, the Purāṇa which deals with the ten topics and which the exalted Lord had imparted to him. Nārada communicated it to the sage Vyāsa of the boundless wisdom on the bank of the Sarasvati, where the latter was engaged in contemplation of the Supreme Brahma. I shall, by expounding the *Bhāgavatam*, be answering your question as to how the universe originated from the person of the cosmic *jīva*, as well as other questions that you have asked (39-45).

CHAPTER X

EVOLUTION OF THE COSMIC FORM

Srī Suka said : In this Purāṇa are dealt with the following topics—‘Sarga’, ‘Visarga’, ‘Sthānam’, ‘Poshaṇam’, ‘Ūti’, ‘Manvantara’, ‘Isānukathā’, ‘Nirodha’, ‘Mukti’ and ‘Āśraya’. It is in order to enable one to understand the truth about the tenth (Āśraya) that the other nine are described here by great souls, directly and explicitly in some places (in the very words of the Veda) while elsewhere that is the purport of what they say. The creation by the will of the Brahma (the Supreme Lord) through the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas*, of the subtle and the gross elements, the organs, the Mahat and the ego, is called ‘Sarga’ (primary creation). The creation of the worlds by Brahmā is called ‘Visarga’ (secondary creation). The triumph of the Lord of Vaikuntha in ensuring that all creatures are kept within their proper bounds, is called ‘Sthānam’ (duration). The bestowal of His grace on His devotees is spoken of as ‘Poshaṇam’ (preservation). The accounts of Dharmas practised by the righteous rulers of the Manvantaras, who were the recipients of His grace, are called ‘Manvantara’ here. The latent tendencies, which are the residual results of past *karma*, are

described as 'ūti'. The accounts of the descents of Hari and of the lives of His devotees, supplemented by many legends, are spoken of as 'Isānukathā'. The state of quiescence of the *jīva*, along with his limiting adjuncts, following the Lord's *yogic* slumber, is called 'Nirodha'. The establishment of the *jīva* in his essence as the Self freed from all factitious modifications, is 'Mukti'. That Which is the Cause of the creation and the destruction of the universe as well as its manifestation, and Which is better known as the Supreme Brahma or the Paramātmā, is the 'Āśraya'. The *jīva* (the *adhyātma puruṣa*), who identifies himself with the various faculties as the experiencer, is no different from the gods (*ādhibhāvika puruṣa*) who activate them. And the body, because of which the same thing (the *jīva*) shows itself in two different ways (as *ādhyātmika* and *ādhibhāvika*) is spoken as the '*ādhibhāutika puruṣa*', the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*. Since, in the absence of any one of these, we cannot know the others, it follows that He Who perceives them all as the Witness is the Paramātmā, the Base and Support of all that is, Himself Self-sustained (1-9).

When the cosmic Puruṣa emerged, separating Himself from the cosmic egg, He pondered on where He should make His abode. And, being Himself pure, He created for Himself the pure waters.¹ Because He dwelt for a thousand years on those waters that He had Himself created, He came to be known as Nārāyaṇa, 'the Dweller on the waters created by Nara', Who was none other than the Puruṣa. That God, the only Existent, by Whose grace substance, action, time, innate disposition and the *jīva* are all able to (exist and) function—they would cease to be, should He turn His face away from them—wished to be many. He, the All-powerful Lord, arose from His *yogic* slumber and divided by His power of Māyā His body in the form of a shining foetus² into three parts, known as the *Adhidaiva*, the *Adhyātma* and the *Adhibhūta*. Listen, and I will tell you how the one energy of the Lord was divided into three (10-14).

¹ Known as 'Garbha-udaka' (S.) ² The collective body, comprising the fourteen worlds (*Deepāni*).

As the Lord employed His manifold creative power in the space within the body, there emerged from it vital energy, mental stamina and bodily strength, and (from the subtle power of these arose) the Sūtrātmā, the Mukhya-Prāṇa or life-breath, obeying whose promptings all the senses function, even as they cease functioning when it does, following it as a King's retainers follow their master. As the result of the internal activities set afoot by the life-breath, the Lord (the cosmic Being) experienced hunger and thirst, and as He wished to drink and eat, the mouth was first differentiated from the mass, and in it the palate, with the tongue (the sense of taste) in it. Then were generated the different juices, which are savoured by the tongue. When the all-pervading one wanted to speak, the god of fire emerged from his mouth, with the organ of speech, and with speech itself, the combined production of those two. His breath was blocked in His throat¹ for a long time when He lay in the water; when He desired to smell, the life-breath produced a violent shaking, and the nostrils were differentiated. The wind-god, the transmitter of smells, and the sense of smell, are located there in the nose. When the body was in darkness, and the Lord wished to see it, His eyes were differentiated, and therein were located the sun and the sense of sight, and power to see colours, which is derived from them. When the Vedas woke up the Lord, and He wanted to hear what they said, His ears were differentiated, and in them were the gods presiding over the quarters, and the sense of hearing; whence the ability to hear sounds. When He wanted to feel the softness or hardness, lightness or heaviness, warmth or coolness of substances, the skin (in which is located the sense of touch) was differentiated, and in it were the hairs (wherein is the sense of touch) and the trees (the gods who preside over it). The Prāṇa-Vāyu (the life-breath) which perceives the objects of touch through the skin, covers it both outside and inside. From the desire to do different kinds of work, His hands grew; in them appeared strength, and Indra, and the capacity to grasp, which is dependent on both these. When He wished to move

¹ Translation follows R. S. renders 'in the water'.

about, His feet came into existence ; and in them were the Lord of the Sacrifice (Vishnu) Himself and the power of motion. It is by exerting this power that men gather the material needed for sacrificial offerings. When He was desirous of progeny, sexual enjoyment and heavenly bliss, the male organ of generation was differentiated ; in it were the faculty of sexual enjoyment and Prajāpati ; and dependent on those two is the joy that sexual union produces. When He wished to void excreta, the anus was differentiated ; in it were the faculty of excretion, and Mitra (the deity thereof), and the power to void excreta, which is dependent on both. When He desired to leave the body entirely in order to enter another body, His navel orifice was differentiated by the action of the *apāna vāyu* ; in it were the *apāna vāyu*, the god of death, and the separation of life from the body, which is dependent on those two. When he desired to ingest food and drink, the stomach, the intestines and the veins and arteries were differentiated ; in them were the rivers and the seas, and satisfaction of appetite and nourishment, which are dependent on them. When he wanted to meditate constantly on His own power of Māyā, the heart was differentiated, and in it were the mind and the moon, thought and desire (14-30).

The skin and the epidermis, flesh and blood, fat and marrow and bone, the seven constituents of the body, are the products of earth, water and fire ; the life-breath is the product of *ākāśa*, water and air. The senses are drawn to their objects. These objects owe their attractiveness to the ego. The mind is the source of all subjective feelings such as likes and dislikes. The intellect is the power of discrimination exercised in regard to such matters. I have now described to you this gross form of the Lord, which has eight¹ outer sheaths, beginning with the earth. Beyond that is the exceedingly subtle causal body, invisible, attributeless, not subject to the world process (of creation and so on), immutable and beyond the reach of mind and speech. Neither of these two forms of the Lord, which I have described, do the enlightened accept as real, because they are the products of Māyā (31-35).

¹ Prakṛti, Ahaṁkāra, Mahat and the five gross elements.

The Supreme Lord, Who is beyond the reach of Prakṛti, takes the form of Brahmā, and though in truth He is never a doer, seems to engage in work, creating names as well as forms and actions as objects of signification. In this wise, He creates the patriarchs, the Manus, the gods, the sages and the hosts of the manes, the Siddhas, the Chāraṇas, the Gandharvas and Vidyā-dharas, the Asuras, Guhyakas, Kinnaras, celestial nymphs, Nāgas, serpents, Kimpurushas and Uragas; the mother-goddesses, the demons, ghosts (goblins), the spirits of the dead, the elementals and evil spirits; the Kūshmāndas, the spirits that cause mental derangement, the Vetālas, the Yātudhānas, the evil planets, the birds, deer, cattle, the trees, the mountains and the reptiles, O King, including the different species of each. He creates all the creatures that fall into two categories (the moving and the non-moving), and those that fall into four¹, and those that live on water, earth or sky. High birth, low birth and middling birth—all these are the results of past *karma*. Gods, men and those who dwell in hell are the three types of such births, caused ultimately by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. And each of these three categories, again, produces three different types, by reason of the predominance of one *guṇa* over the others in their composition (31-41).

The same Lord Who is the Creator of the universe, protects it, incarnate among the lower creation, men and gods; and as Dharma (Vishnu), He makes it prosper. And when its time is up, He, as Rudra Who appears in the Fire of the Dissolution, destroys the universe which He Himself had created, even as the wind disperses massed clouds. The exalted and all-powerful Lord is spoken of by the Veda in these terms. But the enlightened should not think of the Lord in His transcendent glory merely in these terms. He is not, truly, the agent in the creation (and so on) of the universe. The Veda puts forward the *prima facie* view really in order to refute it, since agency is something superimposed by Māyā (42-45).

¹ The two categories are the moving and the stationary. The four are the viviparous, the oviparous, those bred in sweat, and those that germinate.

I have now told you briefly of the Brāhma Kalpa, with its sub-divisions, by way of illustration of what happens in every Kalpa. In that it witnessed the creation of Mahat and the rest, including the gross elements (in the Mahākalpa), and the creation of the world of the moving and the non-moving (in the intermediate Kalpa), it may be regarded as typical of all Mahākalpas. I shall now describe (more fully) the measurement of time, gross and subtle, the characteristics of every Kalpa, and its division into Sub-kalpa, Manvantara etc. And now listen to my exposition of the Pādma-kalpa (42-47).

Saunaka here asked the Sūta, 'You spoke, O respected Sūta, of Kshattā, the foremost of the devotees of the Lord, wandering over the earth, visiting holy places, having abjured the company of his own kin, which it is so hard to renounce. Where did he converse with Kaushārava on topics concerning the soul? And on what truths did the blessed sage, answering his questions, enlighten him? Tell us, good friend, of those doings of Vidura, as well as the reasons for his going away from his relations and his coming back' (48-50).

The Sūta answered : What the great sage, questioned by the King Parikshit, said, I shall retail to you in the order of the King's questions ; please listen.

(Here ends the *Second Book of Srimad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

VIDURA MEETS AND QUESTIONS UDDHAVA

Srī Suka said : Long ago the blessed Maitreya was asked this very question that you have asked me, by Kshattā who had entered the penitential woods after abandoning his prosperous home ; that home to which the exalted and paramount Lord had gone, looking upon it as His own, when as your envoy He refused to enter the house of the King of the Pauravas (1-2).

The King enquired, ' Where did the meeting between Kshattā and the blessed sage Maitreya take place ? And when did they hold converse ? Be pleased to tell me, great sir. No question that the pure-hearted Vidura might ask of one so great could be productive of anything but the highest good, since it would be strengthened by the acclaim of the high-souled ' (3-4).

The Sūta, going on with his narration, said : The great sage was pleased to hear this question of the King Parikshit, and he of the immense knowledge told him, ' Listen, I will tell you.' Srī Suka said : You will recall that the King Dhṛtarāshtra, blinded by his unrighteous desire to pamper his wicked sons, had induced his orphaned nephews to take up their residence in the house of lac, and then had it set on fire. He did not stop his son's despicable act in haling by the hair, to the assembly hall, the queen of the great Kuru chief and his own daughter-in-law, with her tears falling fast and washing the saffron off her¹ breasts. When Ajātasatru, the good man who was steadfast in truth, demanded on his return from the forest the restoration, as promised, of his heritage, which had been fraudulently won from him at dice, he, steeped in ignorance and folly

¹ ' (alt.) Off the breasts of the foe's womenfolk ' (by causing the death of their husbands.) (S).

as he was, would not give it back to him. When Krishna, the Lord and Mentor of the worlds, sent on a mission by the son of Prthā, spoke in the assembly words that fell on the ears of men like nectar, the King¹ treated them with scant regard, what little of *punya* he had ever had having been destroyed (5-9).

When his elder brother summoned him (Kshattā) to his home and asked his advice, he, the foremost of counsellors, tendered advice which has become famous among men accomplished in statecraft as 'Vidura's maxims on polity'. He told him, 'Restore his share to Ajātaśatru who has patiently borne with your intolerable offence, which has roused the ire of his brothers, including Vṛkodara (Bhīma) the hissing serpent of whom you go in dread. The exalted Lord Mukunda, Who is God Himself, looks upon the sons of Prthā as His own folk. The Brahmanas and the gods are always to be found siding with those whom He favours. He lives in His own city, the Yadu chieftains looking up to Him as their god, while all the paramount potentates of the earth have submitted to Him. It is evil incarnate² that has found its way into your home, for he hates the Supreme Lord; but you, looking upon him as your son, pamper him, having alienated Krishna and forfeited your good fortune. For the welfare of your house, you must repudiate the evil one' (10-13).

When he said this, Kshattā, whose virtues good men should love to possess, was subjected to disgrace at the hands of Duryodhana, whose lips trembled in his boundless anger, and his associates, Karṇa, his younger brother (Duśśāsana) and Subala's son (Śakuni). 'Who asked this crook here, this servant-maid's son, who is constantly working against him on whose alms he has thriven, and in the interest of his enemy? Send him packing out of the city at once, with³ nothing but the breath that there is in him.' Though he was thus assailed in the vitals by cruel verbal darts in the presence of his brother, he set aside his pain. Marvelling at the power of Māyā, he left his bow at the door and departed (14-16).

¹ (alt.) Duryodhana. ² In the person of Duryodhana.

³ (v. r.) 'him who is as inauspicious as the cremation ground'.

He who had been granted to the Kauravas as the fruit of their merits left Gajāhvaya (Hastināpuram), and desiring to acquire holiness, went on a pilgrimage to the sacred shrines of Hari, Whose feet purify. And he visited in order all those places Which He, manifesting Himself in a thousand forms¹, has made His own. Alone he went to cities, to the sacred woods on their outskirts, to hills and arbours, to holy streams and lakes, whose water was free from mud, and to holy shrines adorned with images of the exalted Lord Ananta. Wandering all over the earth, he observed vows pleasing to Hari, subsisting on pure food gathered by himself, bathing at stated hours, and sleeping on the bare ground; clad like a mendicant, and unkempt in appearance, he was not recognised by his own people (17-19).

By the time he reached Prabhāsa, after having traversed the entire Bhāratavarsha, the son of Prthā had established himself with the help of the Invincible Lord as the ruler of the whole earth, who had brought it under one authority and one white umbrella. On going there, he (Vidura) heard of the destruction of his kin by mutual jealousy, like the burning of a forest by the fire that breaks out in its bamboo clumps. Mourning their loss, he proceeded silently towards the source of the Sarasvati. He bathed in that river at the sacred spots associated with the names of Trita, Uśanas (Sukra), Manu, Prthu, Agni (the god of fire), Asita, Vāyu (the wind-god), Sudāsa, the cows, Guha (the God Skanda) and Srāddhadeva. And he made a pilgrimage to the many temples dedicated by the sages and the gods to Vishnu and marked by the sign of His principal weapon (the discus), which puts men in mind of Krishna. Then he took a long time travelling through prosperous Saurāshtra, and the Sauveera, Matsya and Kuru-jāngala countries (20-24).

By the time he reached the Yamunā, Uddhava, the devotee of the Lord, had come there, and he saw him. Embracing with ardent affection that celebrated lieutenant of Vāsudeva, who had once been the disciple of Brhaspati, and who had attained the peace that passes understanding, he enquired of the welfare of his kin,

¹ As Brahmā, Rudra and so on.

those who were under the cherishing care of the Lord. 'Is all well with the Primordial Lords Who descended into this world in response to the prayer of Brahmā, who had emerged from the lotus-navel of the Lord? Are they living at ease in the house of Sūra's son¹, the respected friend and well-wisher of the Kurus, who with open-handed generosity gives his sisters, as a father would, all that the heart could desire, and is ever assiduous to please their husbands? Is the heroic Pradyumna, Commander of the Yadu forces, well, my dear—that son whom Rukmiṇī, bore the exalted Lord by propitiating the Brahmanas, and who, in a former birth, had been the god of love? Is all well with him,² who was crowned as King over the Vṛṣṇi, Bhoja and Dāsār-haka clans by the Lord of the lotus eyes, and who, having renounced all thoughts of ascending the throne, had kept at a safe distance? Is Sāmba, Hari's son and His peer, who is first among the chariot-warriors, well and happy, my friend—he who was born to Jāmbavatī, after she had practised many austerities in this behalf, and who was none other than the God Guha, Whom the Great Goddess Herself had borne? And is Yuyudhāna (Sātyaki) well, he who learnt from Phālguna the secrets of the science of archery, and swiftly attained, by service to the Lord Adhokshaja, the Lord Himself, the Goal which even the ascetics who have renounced the world find it so hard to attain? Is the sagacious son of Svaphalka (Akrūra) well, he who has put himself into the hands of the Lord and is without sin? He rolled in the dust of the track marked by Krishna's feet; so great was his love that he could not control himself. Is the daughter of Devaka, the Bhoja, who had Viṣṇu (Krishna) for her son, well and happy like the mother of the gods? How marvellous that she should have brought forth the Lord, as the Veda has given out the sacrifice and its significance! And is the exalted Lord Aniruddha well, he who fulfils the wishes of you, the Lord's devotees, and whom the Veda proclaims as the source of the revealed word, being the activator of the mind, the fourth aspect of the inner

¹ Vasudeva. ² Ugrasena, Kamsa's father, had given up the throne in favour of his son from fear.

organ? And are others such as Hṛdika and the sons of Satyabhāmā, Chārudesheṇa and the rest, going about their concerns happily, my friend, they who give their whole-hearted allegiance to Him whom they look upon as the Lord of their souls? (25-35).

'I hope Dharmaputra maintains the norms of Dharma by cleaving to it, with the help of Vijaya and Achyuta, who are his twin arms as it were. Seeing his imperial affluence secured by victory after victory, Duryodhana suffered the torments of hell (envy) in his great audience hall. Did Bhīma, furious as the snake, wreak his long-meditated vengeance on those who had given him mortal offence, or did he not? The shock of his footfall was more than the earth could bear, as he moved on the battle-field, armed with the mace, in many a striking movement. Does the wielder of the Gāndīva bow, who brought renown to the captains of his chariot force, rest, having quelled his foes—he with whom the Lord-of-the-Hills (Śiva), the seeming hunter, was immensely pleased, when He found Himself hidden from view by the shower of arrows he let fly at Him? Are the twins, the sons¹ of Prthā, protected by her sons, like the eyes by the eyelids, happy, having wrested their own share from the foe in battle, as if a pair of Garudas should have snatched their share of nectar from the mouth of the wielder of the thunderbolt himself? Poor Prthā, too, somehow manages to live, I suppose, for the sake of her children, though she has lost him (Pāndu), the foremost of royal sages, who conquered the four quarters single-handed, armed with the bow, and riding in his chariot (36-40).

'And for him I mourn, my friend, who did unjustly by his dead brother and is doomed to fall into hell; who, being under the thumb of his son, exiled me, his well-wisher, from his city. Seeing by His grace the greatness of Hari, the Disposer of all destinies, Who masquerades as a man and bewilders the minds of men, nothing surprises me. And I go about as I please, unrecognised and unnoticed. Without a doubt the exalted Lord overlooked (for the time) the transgressions of the

¹ By courtesy; though the sons of Mādri, Kuntī (Prthā) brought them up.

Kurus from his desire to free from oppression those who had sought refuge in Him, by slaying the kings who, puffed up with the three¹ kinds of pride, made the earth shake ever and anon under the tread of their marching armies. The taking of a body by Him, Who knows no birth, is for the destruction of those who have strayed from the path of virtue. The doing of deeds by Him Who knows no activity, is to make men take to the *Karma Mārga* (way of works). There could be no other explanation; for even a mere man who has transcended the sway of the *guṇas*, would hardly deserve to be imprisoned in a body or engaged in the proliferation of works. Tell me of the Lord Who knows no birth, the tale of Whose fame can ferry one over the ocean of *samsāra*, Who was born among the Yadus to aid and succour the Guardians of the worlds who had sought His protection, and all others who obeyed His commandments' (41-45).

CHAPTER II

UDDHAVA TELLS OF KRISHNA'S PASSING

Srī Suka said: Asked by Kshattā for news of the loved One, the devotee of the Lord, thus reminded of his master, could hardly reply, in the intensity of his yearning for Him Whom he had lost. How could he who, as a five-year-old child, would not heed his mother's call to breakfast in his absorption in the worship of the Lord, which was his childhood pastime, and who had grown grey in His service, bring himself to reply when asked for news of Him, which put him in mind of His feet? He remained silent for a while, supremely happy savouring the nectar of those feet, plunged in it by the intensity of his devotion. His whole body athrill with joy as tears coursed down his cheeks from the closed eyes, he seemed to Vidura to have achieved the supreme end of life, submerged by the tides of love. Slowly returning from the world of the Lord to the world of

¹ Pride of learning, wealth and high birth. (S.)

men, Uddhava wiped his eyes and answered Vidura with a smile¹ (1-6).

Uddhava said : ' When the sun that was Krishna has set, and our homes, caught in the jaws of that all-devouring python, time, are bereaved of all good fortune, what happy news can I have to give you of our folk ? Supremely unlucky is this world, and much more so the Yadus, who though they lived in intimacy with Him, did not know that it was Hari, any more than the fish know the moon for what it is. The Sātvatas, though skilled in reading the hearts of men, and extremely intelligent, had looked upon Him, their neighbour, whose pleasures they shared, as but a chief of the Sātvatas, though He was the Inner Ruler in all creatures. He whose mind is anchored in Hari is not disturbed by the words of men who are bewildered by the Māyā of the Lord, or who positively cleave to evil. Having shown for a while His glorious form to those who, because of their imperfect austerities, could not feast their eyes on it to their heart's content, He disappeared, taking that body away with Him and leaving the world blinded. It was the body which He had assumed to play His play as a man, thus displaying the power of His Yoga-Māyā. It represented the very acme of beauty, making even Him marvel at it ; the loveliness of the different limbs enhanced the splendour of the jewels that they wore. Looking at it, which was as balm to tired eyes, during the Rājasūya sacrifice offered by Dharmaputra, everyone in the three worlds thought, " Surely the Creator, in making this glorious form, has expended all his skill in the creation of men ! " Exalted by the laughter and fun and the playful glances charged with love, which the Lord had lavished on them, responding to their advances, had not the women of Vraja stood tranced, their work left undone, their minds having followed in the wake of their eyes ? (7-14).

' Though He is in truth birthless, the exalted Lord, Who is paramount over all things high and low, takes birth, uniting Himself with that (Pradhāna) of which the Mahat is but a fraction—even as fire manifests itself (in the fuel in which it is implicit)—out of compassion

¹ marvelling (at the Lord's exploits). (S.)

for the peaceful souls who are being harried by the turbulent ones, though both are His own images. I too am sadly perplexed, thinking of the Lord Who knows no birth making it appear as if He were born in Vasudeva's prison-house, and of His living in Vraja as though from fear of the enemy, and of His flight from the city, limitless though His power was. My heart pains as I remember His words when He prostrated Himself at the feet of His parents, saying, "Pardon us, father and mother, that we, going in dread of Kamsa, could not devote ourselves to your service." Who that had ever inhaled it could possibly forget the fragrance of the dust on the lotus feet of Him, Who dissipated the burden of the earth by a mere flicker of His arched eyebrow, which was death? Did you not yourself see how the King of Chedi attained at the Rājasūya sacrifice that supreme consummation which the yogis are eager to win by perfection in yoga, though he had hated Krishna as his enemy? How then can one bear to be separated from Him? Other heroes among men, too, drank with their eyes, on the battle-field, the lotus face of Krishna that the eye delighted to look upon, and purified by the arrows of Pārtha, reached His abode. What distresses us, His servants, in the recollection, my dear, is that He Who had neither equal nor superior, Who was the Overlord of the three worlds¹, Who found all delight in the plenary Bliss of the Self, Whose footstool was extolled (as it seemed) by the tinkling crests of the diadems on the heads of those who had for aeons ruled the universe, as they laid their tribute before Him—that He should have been in the service of Ugrasena, standing before him as he sat on the high potentate's seat, and humbly telling him, "May it please your Majesty to listen"! Ah! where shall we find another like Him, the soul of compassion, the sanctuary of refuge? Why, even the sister of Baka, who fed Him, with intent to kill, on her breast filled with poison, virulent as that which rose at the churning of the ocean, was translated to that blessed state which was the just mood of the loving foster-mother! I regard as devotees of the Lord the Asurās themselves whose minds were constantly preoccupied

¹ 'The three Purushas or the three guṇas' (S's *alts.*).

with the Lord of the three worlds in the intensity of their anger ; for they beheld on the field of battle the son of Tārkshya, with the Lord Who wields the discus mounted on his back, swooping down upon them (15-24).

'The Lord was born to Vasudeva as the son of Devaki in the prison of the King of the Bhojas from the desire to ensure the well-being of the earth, as requested by the Unborn (Brahmā). Then He went to Nanda's Vraja because of His father's fear of Kamsa ; and there He lived for eleven years along with Bala, His puissance hidden from the eyes of men. Grazing calves with the calf-herds, the Almighty Lord diverted Himself in the woods on the banks of the Yamunā, whose trees were alive with the chatter of birds ; and displaying those childhood pranks that the inhabitants of Vraja found so delightful, pretending now to weep, anon to laugh, and then to survey the scene with a lordly look, like a beautiful lion cub. Later He grazed the prosperous herd of cows, with its wealth of beauty and varied colours, and its white bulls, and entertained the cowherds, His companions, by playing on His flute. He slew the crafty creatures despatched by the King of the Bhojas, who could assume any form at will, as playfully as a child dismembers his toys. Subduing the King of the serpents and reviving those who had died by drinking the poisoned water, he led the cowherds and the cows to drink of the same water when it had regained its pristine purity. Desiring to spend in a good cause the considerable amount of wealth and goods which had been collected, the Lord got the chief of the cowherds to offer worship to the cows with the aid of the highest Brahmanas. When Indra, whose self-esteem was thus wounded, sent down in his anger a deluge of rain, the distressed Vraja was saved, my good sir, by Him who, out of His abounding grace, playfully held up the mountain like an umbrella over them. Welcoming the onset of night illumined by the rays of the autumn moon, He who adorned the circle of women enjoyed Himself, singing his dulcet melody' (25-34).

CHAPTER III

UDDHAVA RECALLS THE LORD'S EXPLOITS

Uddhava went on : ' Desiring to bring happiness to His own parents, He returned to the city along with Bala. Throwing down from his high seat the lord of the enemy hosts, who was thus slain, He displayed His strength, dragging his lifeless body hither and thither on the ground. Having learnt from Sāndīpani the Veda with all the ancillary lore, merely by hearing it recited once, He granted his request and restored to him his dead son, ripping open the belly of the (demon) Panchajana. Planting his foot on the head of those who had been attracted to Bhīshmaka's daughter by her beauty, which equalled that of the Goddess of Plenty, He, like Suparṇā, snatched her, His lawful prize, away from them even as they were looking, desiring to wed her with her consent. Subduing the humped bulls, which had not had their noses pierced, He married the daughter of Nagnajit by the mode of bride's choice, and battered with His weapons, Himself unharmed, the armed Kings who had been humiliated by that valorous act and yet foolishly hankered after her. Though He was the Lord Who is ever free, He carried off the celestial tree, wishing to please His beloved, like any common mortal ; to recover which the wielder of the thunderbolt pursued Him with all his forces, blinded by anger ; this Indra is surely the pet monkey of his women ! Acceding to the prayer of the Earth-goddess, who had seen her son slaughtered in battle by the discus Sunābha—that son who seemed to swallow up the sky—He gave his son what was left of his territory, treasure, and so on, and then entered his private apartments. On seeing Hari, the Friend of the afflicted, the daughters of kings, whom Kuja (Naraka) had taken by force and kept there, rose up instantly ; and each chose Him of her own accord, by glances prompted at once by joy, bashfulness and love. He took the hands of those women in marriage simultaneously in the same auspicious hour, by the power of His Yoga-Māyā, and wedded each in her separate home with all proper ceremonial, Himself taking as many forms. He begot on each of them ten children,

who were His equals in every way, from the desire to multiply Himself. He brought about the destruction of the Kāla-Yavana, the King of Magadha, and others who, with their armies, laid siege to His city, and thus brought fame to His own folk¹ (whom He had used as His instruments). He had Sambara, Dvīda, Bāna, Mura, Balvala and others slain by the agency of other men ; while He Himself slew Dantavakra and the rest. And He contrived the killing of the Kings, who had joined your brothers' sons on both sides, the earth shaking under the weight of their armies as they advanced towards Kurukshetra. He felt no joy even on seeing Duryodhana as he lay on the ground with his thigh broken and with all his followers about him, having forfeited his good fortune and life by listening to the evil counsel of Karṇa, Duśśasāna and the son of Subala (1-13).

“ How little indeed is this reduction, by eighteen *akṣauhīṇīs*, of the grievous burden of the earth, which has been effected through Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Arjuna and Bhīma, since there still remain intact the forces of the Yadus, which are irresistible, being commanded by those who are My own fractions ! When strife breaks out among them, red-eyed with the intoxication induced by drink, that will bring about their destruction ; there is no other way ; when I am gone, they will disappear too ”. Having thus decided, the Lord placed Dharmaputra on the throne of his fathers. And, showing the world by His own practice the way of life followed by the good, He brought happiness to His friends. Abhimanyu secured through Uttarā the establishment of Pūru's line (by the son he begot on her) ; and when the latter was cut down by the weapon of the son of Droṇa he was restored to life by the Lord. The All-powerful Lord helped Yudhishtira to offer three horse-sacrifices. Giving his whole-hearted allegiance to Krishna, he ruled the earth with his brothers and lived happily. And the Lord, the Soul of the universe, lived in Dvārakā. Following the teaching of the Veda and the ways of the world, He enjoyed the pleasures of life, but without attachment, being established in the knowledge that discriminates between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Bringing

¹ (alt.) ‘infusing them with His own power.’

joy to the denizens of this world and that, and to the Yadus in supreme measure, with His friendly, smiling look and honeyed words, His exemplary life and His glorious form, which was the abode of the Goddess Sri, He diverted Himself, giving His love briefly to His women-folk when night brought them their glad hour (14-21).

‘As He thus lived happily for many years, dissatisfaction with the *dharma*s of the householder, and the means of gratifying the senses, grew upon Him. Who would put his trust in those pleasures that are dependent on the will of Providence, as he himself is—if, that is, he is a man who cleaves with loving devotion to the Lord Who dispenses the fruits of yoga? (22-23).

‘Once the children of the Yadus and the Bhojas, playing in the city, angered the sages; who cursed them, knowing what the Lord had in mind. A few months later, the Vṛshnis, Bhojas, Andhakas and others went gaily to Prabhāsa riding in their cars, their minds bemused by destiny. Having bathed and offered water libations there to the manes, the gods and the sages, they made gifts of cows endowed with all excellences to the Brahmanas; and also gave them gold and silver, bedsteads, raiment, deer-skin and woollen clothing, vehicles, chariots, elephants, young maids, land for their maintenance, and rich delectable food, dedicating all the gifts to the Lord. And those heroic men, who lived for the sake of the cows and the Brahmanas, made their obeisance to the Brahmanas with bowed heads’ (24-28).

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE YADUS PERISHED AT EACH OTHER'S HANDS

Uddhava went on: ‘Then, with their permission, they took their food; and they drank strong drink made from grain. Their minds fuddled by it, they reviled each other in words that cut to the quick. When the sun went down they, their minds disordered by the heavy drink, fell to fighting among themselves like bamboo rubbing against bamboo. And the Lord, seeing the

way His will was working, purified Himself in the Sarasvati and sat at the foot of a tree. When the Lord, Who relieves the distress of His devotees, had made up His mind to destroy His own race, He had asked me to go to Badari. Though I knew His intentions, I still came after my Master, O subduer of the foe, because I could not bear to be parted from Him (1-5).

‘Searching for my beloved Master, I found Him, the Abode of Sṛī, seated all alone on the bank of the Sarasvati, though He in truth needs no support. Dark-complexioned and dazzling in His purity, being free from all taint, with His violet eyes that were pools of peace, with His four arms and His raiment of yellow silk, He could be easily spotted out. His lotus-like right foot rested on His left thigh, and He leant against the young peepul tree behind Him. He had renounced all pleasures and yet was filled with bliss. There by chance that great devotee of the Lord (Maitreya), whose friend and companion was Dvaipāyana, and who had gained the supreme end of life and was wandering as the spirit moved him, found Him. In the hearing of that sage, who was greatly attached to Him and whose head was bowed in love and joy, He addressed me, putting new strength into me, by looking at me with a long and lingering look full of love and laughter (6-10).

‘The Lord said: “Being seated in your heart, I know what you wish, and I shall grant you (the means of attaining) that which others cannot even dream of getting. In the far past you, who were one of the Vasus¹, worshipped Me in the Sattrā sacrifice offered by the patriarchs and the Vasus jointly, solely from the desire to attain Me. This is the last of your births, good soul, since in this you have won My Grace. You are fortunate in being able to see Me, by reason of your exclusive devotion to Me, when I am about to depart secretly from the world of men. I shall impart to you the supreme wisdom, which proclaims My glory, and which I imparted in the far past to the Unborn (Brahmā) who was seated in the lotus that had sprung from My navel at the beginning of the present creation. That wisdom wise men know as the *Bhāgavatam*”’ (11-13).

¹ The text has, ‘O Vasu’.

‘Honoured by such consideration and assured by the Supreme Lord Whose loving glances had been so much grace bestowed upon Me, I replied with folded hands in a faltering voice, the hair standing on end in my ardent love, and the tears falling, “What is there among the four ends of life that those who serve Thy lotus feet cannot obtain, O Lord? But I ask for none of these, longing as I do only to cling to those feet. That Thou performest acts, though in truth a non-doer, hast taken a body, though in reality birthless, hast sought safety in a fortress and fled from the enemy, though Thou art time, the destroyer, and livest the householder’s life with numberless women, though Thou delightest only in the Self—all this troubles the minds of even the wise. And my mind is confounded as I recall Thy summoning me, when there was need to take counsel, and asking my advice and listening with all attention, as if Thou wert ignorant—Thou, O Lord, Whose powers of intelligence and knowledge are un-circumscribed, unfragmented and unclouded. Impart to me, My Master, if Thou deemest me capable of grasping it, that supreme and plenary knowledge which brings one enlightenment on the mystery that is Thyself and which Thou didst give to Brahmā, so that we may easily pass beyond the travail of birth and death” (14-18).

‘When I thus represented to Him my ardent desire, the Supreme Lord, He of the lotus eyes, revealed to me the ultimate truth of His Being. Having obtained from the Lord, Whose feet I had worshipped and Who was my Guru, the knowledge that leads to the Self-Realization which is the supreme end of life, I prostrated myself at His feet and walked round Him in all reverence, and with a mind anguished by the separation from Him, came here. Treasuring the joy I had from gazing at Him, and bearing the grief of bereavement, I shall go to the hermitage of Badari, which is so dear to Him; where the God Narayana and the blessed sage Nara practised long and severe austerities, without causing hardship to others, to bestow all blessings on the world’ (19-22).

Sri Suka said: When he thus heard from Uddhava the harrowing news of the slaughter of his friends,

Kshattā, being a wise man, got over his grief by the exercise of discrimination. When the great devotee of the Lord, foremost of the followers of Krishna, was about to leave, the Kaurava chief addressed him thus, because of his faith in him. Vidura said : ' Be pleased, my honoured friend, to reveal to me the highest knowledge that would let one into the secret of His Being, which the Supreme Lord, the Dispenser of the fruits of yoga, imparted to you ; for the devotees of the Lord Vishnu go about only to promote the true interests of those who humbly wait on them ' (23-25).

Uddhava told him, ' It is the sage Kaushārava (Maitreya) that you should propitiate, in order to gain the knowledge of the supreme truth ; for in my presence he was required by the Lord Himself to do this for you, when He was about to leave the world of mortals ' (26).

Srī Suka said : Uddhava, his heart purged of all grief by conversing with Vidura about the glorious qualities of the Lord Who holds the universe in Himself, spent that night on the bank of the Yamunā, as if it were but a second, and then departed (27).

The King asked, ' When the Vṛshnis and the Bhojas had met their end, and even Hari (Krishna), the Lord Who is paramount over the three Powers had discarded His body, how was it that Uddhava, first among the great commanders of the chariot corps,¹ alone remained alive ? ' (28).

Srī Suka replied, ' Having had His own race destroyed by time, the Brahmanas' curse merely serving as a pretext, the Lord, Whose will is never frustrated, decided in His own mind thus, without a doubt, when He was about to discard His body. " When I have vanished from this world, only Uddhava, who is foremost among those that are self-controlled,² deserves directly to receive that supreme knowledge which ever abides with Me. Uddhava, the eminently capable man, is no whit inferior to Me, because his mind is not disturbed by the objects of desire. So let him remain here to teach the world the truth about Myself " ' (29-31).

¹ This might refer to Krishna, as some commentators have taken it.

² This follows B. 'Those who have won self-realization' does not seem appropriate in the context.

Having received his charge from the Master and Mentor of the three worlds, the Author of the Veda, Uddhava betook himself to Badari and worshipped Hari in rapt contemplation. And Vidura, having heard from Uddhava of the universally acclaimed exploits of Krishna, the Supreme Lord Who had assumed a body in play, and of His discarding the same in the manner aforesaid—an act which should strengthen the courage of the firm-minded, but is wholly impossible for others, those craven souls who lead an animal life ; having heard, too, O first of the Kurus, that Krishna had thought of him, gave himself up to meditation on the Lord. And he wept aloud, his heart wrung by love, when the devotee of the Lord went on his way. The great chief of the Bharatas, having won fulfilment on the banks of the Yamunā, reached in a few days the heavenly stream (the Gangā) where lived the sage, the son of Mitrā (32-36).

CHAPTER V

MAITREYA ON PRIMARY CREATION

Srī Suka said : Waiting upon Maitreya, that man of total enlightenment, who had settled down at Gangādvāra (Hardwar), Kshattā, the great chief of the Kurus, whose heart was pure by reason of his devotion to Achyuta, respectfully questioned him, attracted by his kindliness and affability. Vidura expressed himself thus : ‘ Men do actions desiring happiness, but achieve neither happiness nor the surcease of sorrow : they only go on doing and suffering. May the blessed sage be pleased to tell us what in the circumstances it were best for men caught up in *samsāra* to do. I have no doubt that it is for the redemption of men whose faces are turned away from Krishna, because of their past *karma*, and who are addicted to unrighteousness and therefore fallen into misery, that the blessed souls, the devotees of Janārdana go about the world. Therefore, supremely venerable sage, teach the happy way by which men may propitiate the Lord and obtain from Him, when He is seated in their pure hearts, the immemorial wisdom vouched for by the Veda and, along with it, direct knowledge of the

Self. Be pleased to explain, O foremost of Brahmanas, what acts the Lord, Who is ever free and Who is the Supreme Controller of Māyā with its three *guṇas*, does when He elects to descend into this world; how He, Who is in truth never involved in action, brings this universe into existence at the beginning, and having firmly established it, provides for its preservation and sustenance; how He lays up again the universe in the cave of His heart and rests in His Yoga-Māyā, all modes of activity abandoned; how He, the Lord of the master-yogis, the One without a second, enters into all this creation of His and manifests Himself multifariously; how He, taking different incarnations in the spirit of play, performs many exploits to safeguard the welfare of the Brahmanas, the cows and the gods—tell us of all those glorious deeds of the Lord, the crown and crest of those who enjoy unsullied fame, and of which we can never tire of hearing (1-7).

‘Tell us, too, by means of what different principles (*tattvas*) the Overlord of the universe made the worlds, the Guardians thereof, and the regions beyond the mountain of light, in which all classes of living beings are distinguished by the obvious differences of their bodies fashioned for their different duties; also, how Nārāyaṇa, the Creator of the worlds, the Self-existent Lord, effected the differences between individuals, their specific natures, the *karmas* arising therefrom, and the forms and names they bear (8-9).

‘I have heard the Dharmas pertaining to all *varṇas*, high and low, expounded repeatedly by Vyāsa, O blessed one, and am content with what I have heard, because those Dharmas promise but trivial pleasures; but not with the brief and tantalising glimpses one got therein of that enchanting flood—the tales of Krishna’s doings. Who could ever feel that he had had enough of the glorious tales of Him of the hallowed feet Whom the seers extol during the concourse of sages like you, since the Lord, entering through the orifice of the ear, destroys the infatuation with house and home, which is the cause of being involved in the cycle of life and death? Wishing to expound the glorious qualities of the Lord, the sage Krishna (Dvaipāyana), your companion, gave out

the *Bhārata*, in which he no doubt managed to rouse the interest of the listener in the story of Hari by interspersing it with descriptions of the common pleasures that attract men. This interest grows with the faith and zeal of the listener, and puts him out of love with other things. And it quickly dispels all his sorrows, for he is supremely content, immersed in the constant contemplation of the feet of Hari. I grieve for those who are to be pitied, because they are ignorant, and for those others who are even more to be pitied because, by reason of their sins, they are averse to hearing the story of Hari; the unwinking god (time) is continually wearing out their lives, spent futilely in thought, word and deed. Therefore, O Kaushārava, friend of the afflicted, leaving out all else, extract the very essence, as the bee does honey from flowers, and let us have the story of Hari for the greater good of mankind, of Hari Who bestows all bliss, and by hearing of Whose fame the sinner is cleansed. Tell us of the superhuman exploits performed by the Lord when He, Who had originally assumed all powers for the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, was incarnate (as man)' (10-16).

Srī Suka said: Thus questioned by Kshattā, with a view to promoting the supreme good of all men, the blessed sage Kaushārava warmly commended him. He said: You have done well to ask this question, O benefactor of the world, impelled by the desire that all men should benefit; and you, whose mind is given to the Lord Who is beyond the reach of the senses, will win widespread fame in this world. I am not surprised that you, O Kshattā, born of the loins of Bādarāyaṇa, should enshrine Hari, the Supreme Lord, in your heart with exclusive love and devotion. You are none other than the Lord Yama, chastiser of all sinners, born by reason of Māndavya's curse, to Satyavati's son, of the servant-maid whom his brother had taken to his bed. You were most dear to the exalted Lord and His devotees; hence He ordered me, when departing, to instruct you. Therefore, I shall describe to you in due order the past-times of the Lord, exalted by His unique *yogic* power, which had for their object the preservation, creation and destruction of the universe (17-22).

Before creation started, the universe existed as but the exalted Lord, the Sole Existent, the very Self of all souls, and their Master ; Who (after creation starts) is perceived as many, characterized by diversity of mind and disposition. He thus existed alone, because It was His wish to be solitary. When He, as Seer, looked about Him, He found no object ; for He alone was manifest. Because His power of *Māyā* was quiescent, it seemed to Him as if He were non-existent ; though really He was not, since His intelligence was unsleeping. It was through that power of the Lord, the Seer, which is called *Māyā*, and which is of the nature of cause and effect, that the Omnipotent Lord created the universe, O blessed one. When the equilibrium of the *guṇas* of *Māyā* was disturbed by time, His power, *Adhokshaja*, possessed of potency (the power of intelligence), deposited His seed¹ in *Māyā* through the agency of the *Puruṣa*², a fraction of Himself. From the unmanifest *Māyā*, activated by time, emerged the *Mahat*, which was essentially of the nature of intelligence and the dispeller of darkness; lighting up the universe, which it contained within itself. And the *Mahat*, which was dependent on the reflection of the Lord's power of intelligence, the three *guṇas*, and time, imposed a modification on itself when the purposeful look of the Lord, intent on creating the world, fell on it. From the *Mahat* as it thus changed emerged the principle of the ego. Being the source of the elements, the organs and the mind, it was the support of effect, (instrumental) cause and agent.³ The ego is threefold in character, the different aspects being known by the names *Vaikārika* (or *Sāttvika*), *Taijasa* (or *Rājasa*) and *Tāmasa*. From the *Vaikārika-ahamkāra*, as it underwent modification, emerged the mind, and the gods, who manifest the objects of the senses (by activating the respective organs). All the organs of sense, as well as those of action, are the products of *Rājasa-ahamkāra* alone. The *Tāmasa-ahamkāra* is the source of the subtle element sound, whence issues *ākāśa* (space), which is the

¹ 'Chidābhāsa' (reflection or image of the Lord's power of intelligence.) (S.) ² In His capacity as director and controller of *Prakṛti*. ³ The body, the senses, and the gods activating them.

body of the Lord. When space, united with time, the *guṇas* of Māyā and the reflection of the Lord's power of intelligence, received the purposeful look of the Lord, the sense of touch emerged from it; and that, undergoing modification, produced air. Air, endowed with plenary strength, and united with space, produced the subtle element colour, from which emerged fire, which, as light, manifests the world of objects. United with air, fire, with the eye of the Lord upon it, produced water from *rasa* (taste), its subtle element, through the combined influence of time, Māyā and the reflection of the Lord's intelligence. United with fire (and the rest aforesaid, as well as their qualities), water produced, when the eye of the Brahma purposefully rested on it, the earth from smell, its subtle element, through the influence of the same combination. Those who are well-versed in these matters say, O fortunate one, that of the elements, *ākāśa* and the rest, that which emerges later than another has more qualities than its predecessor, since its cause (along with the qualities thereof) is implicit in it (23-36).

The gods (presiding over Mahat and the rest), who were the fractions of Vishnu, and who bore upon them the marks of time (that is, change), of Māyā (confusion) and of the Lord's *amśa* (consciousness), found themselves incapable of executing their task (of creating the universe), because they were distinct and unconnected with each other. And so they sent up a prayer to the Supreme Lord, with folded hands. The gods said: 'We make our prostrations, O Lord, to Thy lotus feet, the umbrella which shields from the scorching sun (of *samsāra*) those who seek shelter under it. By cleaving to those feet, the renouncers throw off the cruel sufferings of the transmigratory life. O Lord, our Father, since the *jīvas*, caught in *samsāra*, and assailed by the three afflictions, find no happiness in themselves if they do not worship Thy feet, may it be given to us to gain the umbrage of those feet and the liberating knowledge they confer. We seek refuge in those lotus feet of Thine which purify, and which the sages contemplate, with the aid of the Vedas—those birds that build their nests in the lotus that is Thy mouth—in the mind

that is free from all attachments ; those feet from which flows the foremost of the streams that wash off all sins. May we reach the footstool on which rest Thy lotus feet, by meditating on which, in hearts which have been purified by faith and the devotion that comes from hearing of Thy glory, men become endowed with that steady enlightenment which is the result of knowledge fortified by non-attachment. May we reach the shelter of Thy lotus feet, O Lord that art incarnate for the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, those feet which assure, the moment they are remembered, freedom from all fear to their devotees. May we worship Thy lotus feet, O Lord, Who though ensconced in the citadel of the heart, art far beyond the reach of men who obstinately cling to such trivial things as one's body, house and home. The minds of those men, O Lord That art supremely great, are distracted by the senses that are turned towards the external world, and therefore they do not see Thy devotees who glow with the enjoyment of the beauty of Thy footsteps. Those whose hearts have been purified by the love that wells up in them from drinking in with their ears Thy nectar-like tale, O God, find the enlightenment that is rooted in non-attachment, and easily and truly reach Vaikuntha. Others, who have achieved self-control and overcome Māyā by the yoga of concentration of the mind on the Self, attain Thee, the Supreme Lord, without a doubt, but hard is this way to liberation, which may be won with ease by service to Thee (37-46).

' We, who are Thine, were created by Thee in succession, O primordial Lord, with three different dispositions, *sāttvic*, and so on, for the purpose of creating the universe ; but being thus divided (in disposition) we are unable to combine and place before Thee the instrument (the universe) Thou wouldst use in playing Thy cosmic play. Vouchsafe us, O Lord That knowest no birth, that plenary light which is uniquely Thine, so that we may bring Thee tribute at the due hour and obtain the pabulum that will sustain us ; so that, also, those beings who will tenant the worlds may make without difficulty their offerings to us both and maintain themselves. Thou art the cause of the coming into

being of us, the gods, and our creations, while Thou art Thyself the ever-changeless, primordial Lord, the First Cause. For it was Thou, the Lord That knows no birth, That didst impregnate Māyā, Thy power, which is the womb of all *guṇas* and *karmas*, depositing therein the seed that was the Mahat. Tell us, O God, That art the Soul and Sustainer of the universe, tell us what is Thy work which we should do, for which we, Mahat and the rest, were created, and grant us the knowledge as well as the ability to do it, since we are wholly dependent on Thy blessing' (47-50).

CHAPTER VI

THE BIRTH OF THE COSMIC PURUSHA

The sage (Maitreya) said : Seeing the plight of His powers, which stood uncombined, the knowledge of how to create the universe still unawakened in them, the all-powerful Lord of the mighty strides entered, as the Inner Ruler, along with His own power *Prākṛti*, awakened by time, into all the twenty-three *tattvas* simultaneously. Entering into them as creative activity, He roused their dormant knowledge of the work that awaited them and made them, who had stood separate so far, combine. Having thus recovered their creative power, the group of twenty-three produced, under the prompting of the Lord, the body (known as the *Adhī-pūruṣha*) of the cosmic Purusha. As the result of the Supreme Lord's entering into them, they combined with fractions of each other, and undergoing change, produced the cosmic egg within which are to be found all the worlds of the moving and the non-moving (1-5).

The body of the cosmic Purusha, which shone like gold, remained within the egg that lay on the waters for a thousand celestial years, along with all the *jīvas*. That *Virāj*, produced by the *tattvas* which create the worlds, and endowed with the powers of knowledge, activity and enjoyment, differentiated himself as one, as ten and as three. He is the soul in all creatures and, as a *jīva*, a fraction of the Supreme Lord, and the first of His incarnations, in which the entire body of created

beings comes to be contained. The *Virāj* is threefold, with reference to the faculties of sensation and action, to the gods that rule them, and to the bodies (of individuals); it is tenfold with reference to *Prāṇa*; while it is one only, with reference to the spirit (*jīva*) ensconced in the heart (6-9).

Adhokshaja, the paramount Lord, bearing in mind the prayer of the *tattvas* that create the world, focussed His thoughts purposefully on the cosmic body in order to endow the *tattvas* with the capacity to discharge various functions. When the Lord did this, the various centres pertaining to the gods were differentiated in it; listen while I describe them. In the mouth, which was first differentiated, the god of fire, the Guardian of the (South-eastern) quarter, entered along with the faculty of speech, which he controls, and which enables the *jīva* to speak. Then the palate of the cosmic Purusha (Hari¹) was differentiated, and Varuṇa, the Guardian of the (Northern) quarter, entered it, along with the faculty of taste, which he controls and which enables the *jīva* to savour juices. The nostrils of the cosmic Purusha (Vishnu) were differentiated, and the *Āsvin* twins entered them, along with the faculty of smell, which they control and by which the *jīva* is able to distinguish smells. The eyes of the cosmic Purusha (the Supreme Lord) were differentiated, and the sun-god, the Guardian of the (Eastern) quarter, entered them along with the faculty of vision, which he controls and by which the *jīva* is enabled to distinguish colours. His skin was differentiated, and the wind-god, the Guardian of the (North-Western) quarter, entered it along with the faculty of touch, which he controls, and which, being like the life-breath (in its pervasiveness), enables the *jīva* to distinguish all things by touch. His ears were differentiated, and the deities of the directions entered, along with the faculty of hearing, which they control, and by reason of which the *jīva* is able to hear sounds. When the skin with the hair on it was differentiated, the deities which preside over herbage, and which control the faculty by which one feels the itching sensa-

¹ 'Hari', 'Vishnu' etc. in these verses are a reminder that the devotee should meditate on the Viraj as if he were Hari etc.

tion (through the hair on the skin) entered it along with that faculty. His male organ of generation emerged, and Prajāpati entered it along with virility, which he controls and because of which the *jīva* finds pleasure in sex. The anus of the cosmic Purusha was differentiated, and Mitra, the Lord of the world, entered along with the function of excretion, which he controls and which enables men to evacuate. His hands were differentiated, and Indra, the Lord of heaven, entered them along with skill in business, which he controls and by which men make their living. His feet were differentiated, and Vishnu, the Lord of the universe, entered them, along with the faculty of movement, which He controls and by means of which men reach their destinations. (His¹ intellect was differentiated, and the Lord of Speech (Brahmā) entered it along with the faculty of gaining certain knowledge, which he controls and by means of which men arrive at a clear apprehension of things). His heart was differentiated, and the moon-god entered it along with the faculty of mentation, which he controls, and because of which the *jīva* entertains desires and doubts. Rudra entered the ego, which was differentiated, along with the egoistic consciousness which it controls and because of which men, identifying themselves with its objects, engage in action. His *chitta* (heart as the seat of intellection) was differentiated, and the Great One (Brahmā) entered it along with the faculty of intelligence, because of which men are capable of wisdom (10-26).

From the head of the cosmic Purusha emerged heaven, from His feet the earth, and from His navel the upper air; in these three worlds are to be found gods and others, the products of the three *guṇas*. By the strength of *sattva* in them the gods attained heaven. By reason of their *rājasic* disposition were born on earth men, who engage in activities (such as the sacrifice), and others (like the cows), which are dependent upon them. By reason of the third kind of disposition (*tamas*), which characterised them, the hosts of Rudra's attendants people the space between earth and heaven, which

¹ The verse (23 in the text) enclosed in brackets, is accepted by R., but apparently not by S. It seems to contradict verses 12 and 26 of this Chapter.

is the Lord's navel. From the mouth of the cosmic Purusha emerged the Veda, and also the Brahmana, who because he issued from the mouth became the first of the *varṇas* and their mentor. From His arms arose the function of rulership, and the Kshattriya, who discharged it, and who, being a fraction of Viṣṇu, protects all the *varṇas* from the ravages of depredators. From the Lord's thighs came the occupations which provide men with the means of living, and the Vaiśya who lives by business and trade. From the feet of the Lord came service, and the Sūdra, who was created in the far past (at the very beginning) for its due performance; such service is essential for the fulfilment of the duties of all the *varṇas* and is greatly pleasing to Hari (27-33).

As the *varṇas* originated from Hari, along with their modes of livelihood, they worship Him, their Father, Mentor and Provider, with faith and zeal for their self-purification. Who could aspire even to attempt to describe in anything like fullness the infinite aspects of this (Viraj) form of the Lord Adhokshaja, O Kshattā, enriched by the plenary strength of the Yoga-Māyā of the Lord, utilizing all His powers—time, action and innate disposition? But, still, I shall describe Hari's glories, my dear, as I have been taught, doing my best according to my lights, and thus cleanse my tongue, fouled by talk of other things. Has it not been authoritatively declared that the extolling of the glorious qualities of Him Who is first among those whose praises are holy, is without a doubt the supreme fruit of the faculty of speech, even as the passive reception of the nectar of His tale, told by the learned, is the highest reward of the faculty of hearing? Was even the first of the seers (Brahmā) able to determine the extent of the glory of the Lord, the Soul in all beings, my child, for all that his understanding had been ripened by a thousand years' practice of yoga? The Māyā of the Lord confounds even those who possess the most marvellous powers. When the Ātman (Hari) Himself does not know the full reach and scope of that Māyā, how can others? Salutations to Him, the exalted Lord, Whose ways baffle mind and speech, and even the Deity (Rudra) who presides over the ego, as well as these other gods' (34-40).

CHAPTER VII

VIDURA VOICES HIS DOUBTS

Srī Suka said : When Maitreya said this, Vidura, the sagacious son of Dvaipāyana, voiced his doubts, questioning him in a disarming way. Vidura asked : ' How can the Lord, Who is pure consciousness and immune from change, consistently engage in action, O Brahman, and how can He, Who is void of all attributes, display qualities even in a spirit of play ? What prompts the child to play is desire ; and that is stimulated by the presence of another. How could desire visit Him Who is supremely content with the Self and neither knows nor needs a second ? It has been stated that the Lord creates the universe by the Māyā constituted of the three *guṇas*, which deludes the *jīva*¹ ; that He likewise sustains it, and then makes it disappear again. But how could the *jīva*, whose perception is never affected by such factors as space, time, or circumstances, by his own state or by the presence of another, be subject to nescience ? He, the experiencer, who is present in all bodies, is one only, the Lord Himself. When that is so, how could the *jīva* fall from the state of bliss, or be afflicted by *karma* ? My mind is sore perplexed by these doubts due to ignorance, learned sir, Be pleased to help clear this mental fog ' (1-7).

Srī Suka said : Thus critically questioned by Kshattā from the desire to ascertain the truth, the sage, whose mind was ever absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord, and who was wholly free from pride, replied with a faint smile. Maitreya said : It is the Lord's Māyā that is responsible for what seems to be a logical contradiction—that the *jīva*, who is in reality free, should seem to be in bondage and afflicted by dejection, even as the dreamer sees calamities, like his own beheading, happening to him without any foundation in fact. But as it is only the reflection of the moon in the water that is disturbed by the disturbance of the water, while no disturbance is seen in the moon itself, so the characteris-

¹ Vidura argues from the postulate that the *jīva* being in essence the *Brahma*, Māyā should be powerless over it.

tics of what has no intrinsic reality (such as the body, for instance) are seen in the *jīva*, who identifies himself with the unreal, and not in the Lord. This obsession with the unreal gradually disappears with the cultivation of devotion to the Lord, resulting from the practice of non-attachment and the vouchsafing of His Grace by Vāsudeva. The moment the senses are stilled by the absorption of the mind in the Supreme Lord Hari, the Inner Ruler, all his sufferings vanish, like those of the sound sleeper. By reciting, and listening to the recital of the glorious qualities of the Foe of Mura, one stills all the agitation that plagues the mind; what doubt, then, that the delight the heart feels in taking the dust of His lotus feet will do that? (8-14).

Vidura said, 'My doubts have been sundered by the sword of cogent exposition you have used, able sage. Now my mind easily comprehends both the Lord's freedom and the *jīva's* dependence. You have clearly shown, learned sir, that these miseries are due to the *avidyā* that deludes the *jīva* and is caused by Hari's *Māyā*; that they are illusory and have no foundation in reality; and that the world itself would not exist but for that *avidyā*. He who is wholly ignorant of the truth, and he who has attained to the truth that lies beyond the reach of the intellect, are both happy; it is he who is neither the one thing nor the other that is unhappy. By waiting at your feet I have realized that the phenomenal world has no reality, though it is seemingly true, and I shall shake myself free from the persistence of that illusion; for by humble service to the like of you, there will spring up in the heart that festive joy in worshipping the feet of the exalted and immutable Lord, the Foe of Madhu, which, becoming native to one, destroys all sorrows. It is not easy for men of scant austerities to get the opportunity to serve those who are pathways to Vaikuntha and in whose company the glory of Janārdana, the God of gods, is ever sung (15-20).

'Having first created Mahat and the rest, and their evolutes, the senses and so on, in due order, the All-pervading Lord created (you have said) the body of the cosmic Purusha from parts of them, and then entered into it. The Vedas describe the cosmic Purusha as

the first Purusha, endowed with a thousand feet and thighs and arms, in whom these worlds are lodged together with plenty of room for each. You described him as containing the ten vital breaths, with their threefold nature,¹ as well as the senses, the objects thereof and the gods, who preside over the senses, and said that the *varṇas* originated from him. Please tell us of the creative powers (Brahmā and others), who derive from him and who are the cause of the universe swarming with people of diverse kinds, their sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and other kin. Who were the Patriarchs, the first progenitors, to be created? Tell of them, O son of Mitrā, and of the nine kinds of creation and their distinguishing features; tell us of the Manus, the rulers of the Manvantaras, their lineage and history. Also tell us of the worlds above and below the earth, their dispositions and size, as well as those of the earth, and how the different classes of creatures came to be created—the lower animals, men, gods, reptiles, birds, and creatures bred in the womb and other creatures hatched from eggs or born of sweat or by germination. Tell us of the mighty prowess of Him with Whom the Goddess Śrī abides, Who creates, manifests and destroys the universe through His incarnations² embodying the different *guṇas*, and also provides the base for these operations (21-28).

'Please tell us of the differentiation of *varṇas* and *āśramas*, as well as their distinctive appearance, conduct and disposition; of the lives and doings of the sages, and the division of the Veda. Tell us, also, great sir, of the different sacrificial modes, the various paths of Yoga, Jñāna and Sāṅkhya, and the Tantra (Pāñcharātra) revealed by the Lord Himself. Tell us how heresies came into existence; how the *pratiloma* castes originated; how many and of what kind are the fruits of the *karmas* and the *guṇas* of the *jīvas*. Tell us, too, how *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Moksha* may be served without mutual conflict. Please tell us of the codes of economics and of statecraft, of the rules governing the learning of the Vedas and the performance of *śrāddha*, and of the crea-

¹ Deriving from the three *guṇas*; (*alt.*) with their three characteristics, vigour, will-power, and strength. ² Brahmā, Vishnu and Rudra.

tion of the manes ; of the position of the planets, constellations and fixed stars in the zodiac and their movements ; of the fruits of gifts made, austerities practised and good works done ; of the codes that should govern the exiled and those in distress. And, O blameless one, tell us how best the exalted Lord Janārdana, the source of Dharma, may be propitiated, and on whom He bestows His Grace. Teachers who love the humble tell their diligent pupils and sons, even unasked, what it is good for them to know, O best of Brahmanas (29-36).

'What are the various ways in which the dissolution of the world comes about, O blessed sage ? And during the dissolution, who waits upon the Lord, and who are quiescent when He is at rest ? The truth about the *jīva*, the essential nature of the Supreme Lord, the knowledge derived from the Upanishads, which is the fruit of the *guru-śishya* relationship, and the means of obtaining that knowledge, which the learned have expounded—for how could men obtain by their own unaided efforts the knowledge that is to be found only in the Veda, or develop non-attachment or devotion to the Lord?—on these matters which I, an ignorant man blinded by nescience am raising from eagerness to hear of Hari's exploits, you, as a friend and well-wisher, should throw light. Neither Vedic learning nor the sacrifices that one may offer, neither the austerities one may practise nor the gifts one may give, can procure one a fraction of the merit that may be acquired by bringing the *jīva* that freedom from fear which knowledge of the truth confers' (37-41).

Thus elaborately questioned by the foremost of the Kurus on the topics with which the Purāṇa deals, the great sage was delighted by this invitation to speak of Hari, and he answered him with a beaming smile (42).

CHAPTER VIII

BRAHMĀ SEES THE LORD BY HIS 'TAPAS'

Maitreya said : The lineage of Pūru is worthy of the homage of all good men ; for it has given birth to you, a Guardian of the world, to whom nothing is more

important than the Lord, and who constantly renew¹ for us the garland of glory that adorns the Invincible. To help men who, yearning for trivial pleasures, have been bogged down in a great sorrow, to extricate themselves from that predicament, I shall chronicle the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which the Lord Himself related to the sages. To the primordial Lord Sankarshaṇa, the god of the unbaffled intellect, as he sat in the nether world, Sanatkumāra and other sages addressed questions from their eagerness to know the truth about Him Who is his superior. He, who was engaged in paying his homage to the Lord Who is his own support and Whom the Vedas call Vāsudeva, slightly opened His lotus eyes, which had been turned inward, from the desire to confer a great blessing on the celestial sages, who touched with their matted locks, wet with the water of the heavenly stream, the lotus cushion on which rested his feet—that lotus which the daughters of the King of the serpents, praying for worthy husbands, lovingly worship, with many offerings. And they, who knew his exploits, repeatedly extolled them in words that came faltering from the overwhelming love they felt for him, whose thousand upraised hoods were lit up by the superb gems in his thousand crowns. You should know that this *Bhāgavatam* was revealed by him, the great god, to Sanatkumāra, who was drawn to the *dharma* of renunciation. And he, my dear, imparted it at his request to Sāṅkhyāyana who had undergone suitable discipline. And Sāṅkhyāyana, the great ascetic, desiring to proclaim the glorious powers of the Lord, narrated the *Bhāgavatam* to our perceptor Parāśara, his disciple, and also to Brhaspati. And the compassionate sage, to whom Pulasthya had granted a boon, taught me this most important of the Purāṇas; and I shall narrate it to you, my child, because you have faith and devotion (1-9).

When the universe was submerged in the waters of what was one vast ocean, the Lord, the One Existent, in Whom the power of intelligence is never obstructed, lay down on His bed, the body of the King of the serpents, and closed His eyes in *yogic* slumber, suspending

¹ By his questions that lead one to dwell on the Lord's exploits.

all activities with a view to enjoying the Bliss of the Self. Withdrawing into Himself the subtle bodies of all creatures, and putting His servant, time, on the alert, He rested on the water, His element, His awareness never abating, though His powers were held in check like fire in the log of wood. Having slumbered for a thousand four-yuga cycles on the waters, He awoke to His task of creation, presented to Him by His own power, known as time, and He beheld the worlds merged in His own body. When His attention was focussed on the subtle elements¹, these, which had been abstracted within Him, were disturbed by the *rajo-guna* prompted by time, and thereupon emerged through His navel. Thanks to time, which activates the residual *karma* of the *jīvas*, they quickly issued out of the body of the Paramātman, their origin, in the form of a lotus, lighting up the vast waste of waters by its sunlike splendour. Into that world-lotus, which was to manifest the entire world of objects of enjoyment, entered the self-same Vishnu (as the Inner Ruler). And in that lotus appeared the Creator (Brahmā), who is the embodiment of the Vedas and who is spoken of as the Self-created (10-15).

Seated on the pericarp of that lotus, he (Brahmā) saw no worlds. He cast his eyes all around him (scanning the horizon), and thus came to have four faces, each turned towards a different direction. And though seated in the lotus that had emerged from the waters, which were wreathed in billows agitated by the wind of the Dissolution, he, the first of the gods, did not, for a wonder, know directly either himself or the truth about the lotus and the worlds it represented. 'Who is this "I" seated in this lotus? Whence came this lone lotus that lies on the water? There should, without a doubt, lie something below this on which it rests, for it must have a support.' Thinking thus, he went down into the water through the passage in the stalk of that lotus; but, having gone down, he could not discover the support on which that rough-stalked lotus rested, though he searched for it. As he thus sought his

¹ This refers to the aggregate of the subtle bodies of all the creatures mentioned in the previous verse.

Creator in that impenetrable darkness, O Vidura, a long time passed—time, that dread weapon of the Lord, which wears out the lives of men, filling them with terror. Baffled in his quest, the god returned to his own place, and slowly turning his mind away from the objects of the senses by controlling his breath, engaged in undisturbed mental concentration on his quest (16-21).

The Unborn found the enlightenment that was the consummation of that yoga at the end of a hundred years.¹ He saw That manifest Itself in the core of his heart Which he had failed to discover before. He saw the One Lord resting as on a couch, on the long body of Seshā, white as lotus fibre, which lay on the waters of the Deluge, whose darkness was dispelled by the lustre of the gems in the thousand hoods, spread umbrellawise.² He saw the Lord, Whose body, containing in itself the three worlds effortlessly, was of a size that was proportionate to its unique length and breadth and was adorned with many a rare gem and article of apparel whose beauty it enhanced. It seemed by its splendour to eclipse the glory of an emerald mountain, which wore the evening cloud like a garment, and was capped with golden crests; which was decked with many a garland made of brilliants, cascades, herbage and wild flowers; which had bamboos for arms, and trees for legs. He saw Him display, out of His abundant compassion, His lotus foot with its lovely toes like petals, lit up by the rays of the nails that shone like the moon—that foot which amply fulfilled the wants of suppliants who offered it pure worship. With a smile that banished the world's sorrows, His beaming face, charming with the sparkle of ear-pendants, the warm red of the lips like *bimba* fruit, the shapely nose and the beautiful eyebrows, welcomed His lovers. His waist, wrapped in raiment tawny as the filaments of the *kadamba* flower, was girdled with a zone, my dear. And on His breast, which bore the Śrīvatsa mark, lay the priceless pearl necklace that He dearly loves. He seemed like a mighty sandal tree which held all the worlds within itself; with the Brahma for its hidden root, the powerful arms

¹ (Lit.) 'at the end of a life-time.' ² In the text this verse comes after the next.

covered with armlets and a host of splendid gems, for the numberless branches loaded with fruit and flower, and the shoulders hugged by the King of the serpents, for the boughs round which serpents coil themselves. And He bore striking resemblance, too, to a mountain which housed all things, stationary and moving, and was hospitable to the great snakes ; which was surrounded by water on all sides ; which seemed to have, in the thousand crowns (on the hoods of Sesha), numberless golden crests ; while the Kausthubha jewel that lay on His breast might have been just delivered up from the bowels of the mountain. From His neck hung the garland of wild flowers, the concrete embodiment of His fame, round which hovered those bees, the Vedas, enhancing its splendour. And by that garland Brahmā knew for certain that it was Hari. He seemed beyond the reach of the sun and the moon, of air and fire, and formidable because of His weapons, which lit up the three worlds with their blaze and were ceaselessly whirling around Him (22-31).

The moment he saw Him, the Lord Creator, keen on the work of creation, saw the lotus in the lake that was His navel, and therein himself, and also the waters, the wind of the Dissolution and the sky ; he saw nought else beside. Being eager to create the worlds, stimulated as he was by *rajas*, and finding only those five materials that he could use, he, with his mind wholly absorbed in the Lord, Whose ways are inscrutable, extolled Him, Who was supremely worthy of praise (32-33).

CHAPTER IX

BRAHMA'S HYMN OF PRAISE

Brahmā said : ' This day I have known Thee, Lord, after a long quest. Alas, how greatly are mortals to blame, that they do not know Thee as Thou art. There is nought but Thee, O Lord. What seems to be is not pure (*sattva*)¹ ; since Thou art Thyself seen as

¹ The text has ' pure ' only. S. adds '*sattva*'. and says that pure *sattva*, unlike the *sattva guṇa* of Prakṛti, is real ; whereas the phenomenal world, which is superimposed on the one Reality, the Brahmā, by the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, is unreal.

the many by reason of the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* of Māyā. Thou, from Whom the darkness of ignorance is eternally excluded by the perennial radiance of Thy power of intelligence, didst assume (of Thy own free will), at the very beginning, from the desire to bless Thy devotees, This form, which is the seed of a hundred incarnations; I myself emerged from the lotus in its navel. What I now see is not in any way different from Thy essential Self, O Supreme Lord, Whose glory is unobscured, Whose unity is unflawed, Whose heart is pure Bliss. For that reason, I cleave to this form with all fervour, O Paramātmān, and also because it is the supreme object of adoration¹, being the creator of the worlds and therefore different from them, and the source of the elements and the senses. This form is, without a doubt, the same as that which Thou didst reveal to us, Thy devotees, O Blessing of the worlds, in the act of deep meditation. Therefore to Thee we render constant homage. Only those are indifferent towards Thee, who, pinning their faith to specious reasoning², must fall into hell. But Thou never stirrest from the heart-lotus of Thy devotees, O Master mine, for they, having imbibed through the ear the perfume of Thy lotus feet carried by the wind of the Vedas, cleave to them with unshakable devotion and will not let them go (1-5).

‘Only so long as they do not seek the sanctuary of Thy feet do men experience, in regard to their wealth and family and friends, the acute distress caused by fear, grief, desire, disappointment, insatiable greed, or the evil infatuation due to notions of ‘Me’ and ‘Mine’. An unkind fate has confounded the understanding of those others who are averse to hearing and speaking Thy praises—which would put an end to all sorrow—and are pitifully immersed in activities that can bring them only unhappiness, from a hankering after the most trivial pleasures. My heart is wrung, O Lord of the mighty strides, seeing men incessantly plagued by hunger and thirst, by the disturbance of the three humours, by cold and heat, by wind and rain, by mutual

¹ This is how S. elucidates the word ‘Ekam’ (One) in the text.

² As atheists.

animosity, and the raging lust and inveterate rancour that are so hard to bear. So long as men think of the *jīva* as something different from the Brahma (and identify it with the body and the like) because of the power of the Lord's *Māyā*, manifesting itself as the senses and the objects thereof, so long, O All-powerful Lord, will the transmigratory travail be a reality to them, though in truth unreal, and will bring each one his load of sorrow, the fruit of his *karma*. Even sages, if they are averse to hearing and speaking Thy glory, are caught up in the travail of life. Tired and worn out after the day's exertions, they lie down to sleep at night; but they wake up with a start every other moment, because of dreams concerning objects on which they had set their hearts; while their attempts to secure them are frustrated by fate (6-10).

'But Thou, O Lord, art assuredly seated in the heart-lotus, purified by loving devotion, of those who, by listening to Thy praises, have learnt the way to reach Thee. And for conferring all blessings on the good, Thou revealest Thyself through any form whatsoever in which they prefer to contemplate Thee, O Lord that art much praised. Thou, the One Who is deep down in all beings as their Inner Ruler and Friend, art not half so well pleased with even such sumptuous worship as the hosts of the gods, whose hearts are clogged by desire, might offer, as by that selfless zeal to relieve the distress of all creatures, which men whose hearts are evil can never know. Therefore the highest reward of the various *karmas* that men perform—the sacrifices and other rites, the gifts they make, the severe austerities they practise, and the vows they observe—is Thy propitiation, O Lord. For the merits of the righteous acts that are dedicated to Thee are never exhausted (11-13).

'I make my salutations again and again to Thee, O Lord, Supreme and Transcendent, Whose intelligence, being of Thy very essence, for ever dispels the delusion of difference; Who abidest in the pure understanding and entertainest Thyself with the manifold sport of *Māyā*, the cause of the creation, preservation and disappearance of the universe. I take refuge in Him Who

knows no birth, and by uttering Whose names, which recall His incarnations, qualities and exploits, even involuntarily and at the moment when life departs, men forthwith free themselves from the accumulated sins of many lives and attain the Brahmā Whose light is never veiled. Salutations to Him, the World-tree, Who was, first, One only, and Who, dividing¹ the trunk (the Pradhāna), which was rooted in Himself, into three main boughs—Myself, the Lord-of-the-Hills, and the All-pervading Vishnu, who are responsible for the creation, destruction and preservation of the world respectively—grew apace, with numberless branches and twigs. Salutations to Him Who, as all-powerful time, which is unwinkingly vigilant, incontinently cuts short the hope of living long that men entertain, when they in their addiction to evil *karma* neglect that duty which is enjoined on them and which will make for their abiding welfare, to wit, Thy worship, which Thou Thyself hast taught. Salutations to Thee, the Lord of the sacrifice, of Whom I go in fear—though I occupy a position that lasts for two *parārdhas*, and receive the homage of all the worlds—and wishing to attain Whom I offered many sacrifices and practised austerities for long years. Salutations to Him, the Supreme Spirit, Who, though the pleasures of the senses have no power over Him, found delight in taking a body of His own free choice and incarnating Himself among the lower creation, men and gods, in order to safeguard the norms of Dharma established by Himself (14-19).

‘Salutations to Him Who, though untouched by the nescience of the five modes, lay down in *yogic* slumber on the waters wreathed in frightful billows, and with the body of the snake for a comfortable couch, because, having gathered the world with its multifarious activities into His maw, He desired that all tired creatures should find rest. Salutations to Thee, O Lord that art worthy of all praise, in Whose lotus-navel I came into existence, and by Whose grace I have the three worlds for my enjoyment; Who holdest the entire universe in Thy belly; Whose eyes, just opened at the end of Thy *yogic*

¹ ‘Dividing’ here means causing disturbance of the equilibrium of the three *guṇas* of Prakṛti.

slumber, are like the half-blown lotus. May He, the exalted Lord, the One Soul and Inner Controller of all the worlds, and their true Well-wisher, be pleased, loving as He does those who yield themselves into His hands, to activate and reinforce my understanding with that knowledge and those powers wherewith He brings joy to the universe, so that I may do the work of creation as before. May He Who grants the wishes of those who put their trust in Him make me, as I create this world which is filled with His prowess, dwell with delight on the exploits He performs, incarnate in it with His noblest qualities, along with His intrinsic and inalienable Sakti, Ramā, so that I may remain untouched by (attachment to *karma* and) the sin that it might involve me in. As I, who appeared here in the lake that was the navel of Him Who lay on the waters, engage, as the deity presiding over the faculty of intelligence, in unfolding this marvellous form (the universe) of Him, Who is the repository of numberless powers, may My utterance of the words that compose the Veda be in no way defective. May He, the Primordial Lord of the infinite mercy, open His lotus eyes and sit up and dispel my despondency with sweet words and the smile that betokens the welling love in Him, so that the universe may be brought into being' (20-25).

Maitreya said : Having set eyes on the Author of his being by virtue of the austerities he had practised, the worship he had offered and the concentration of mind he had developed, and praised Him with all the powers of his mind and speech, he stopped from sheer exhaustion (26).

Madhusūdana, Who understood that what was troubling Brahmā's mind was his ignorance of the disposition of the various parts of the universe (that he was to create), spoke to him, who was dismayed at finding himself amidst the waters of the Deluge, dispelling his dejection straightway by His profound words (27-28).

The exalted Lord said : 'Do not give way to listlessness (born of dejection), O Repository of the Veda. Bestir yourself in the work of creation. What you have besought Me to do I have done already. Give yourself

up to austerities again, and to My worship. By those means you will see the worlds unveiled within the heart, O Brahman ; thus developing devotion and one-pointed attention, you will see Me pervading yourself and all the worlds, and the worlds and all the *jīvas* lodged in Me. The moment a man perceives Me present in all creatures, like fire in the log of wood, he will be rid of delusion. When he realizes that the *jīva*, denuded of the elements, the senses, the objects thereof and the inner organ, is identical with Me, His own Self, he attains *moksha*. While creating an infinite diversity of creatures in accordance with the fruits of their past *karmas*, your mind shall not succumb to bewilderment ; for in doing your work you shall enjoy My plenary Grace. The sinful quality of *rajas* shall not bind you, the first seer ; since even while engaged in the work of creation your mind shall remain anchored in Me. You have this day attained knowledge of Me, Whom it is impossible for those who are limited by bodies to know ; for you now know Me as unconditioned by the elements, the organs, the *guṇas* and the ego (29-36).

‘ When you sought to discover the origin of the lotus in the water by going down the lotus stalk, prompted by the doubts that beset your mind in regard to Me, I showed Myself to you in the core of your heart. It was because I bestowed My Grace on you that you sang the hymn in My praise, reminiscent of My life and doings, the tale of which itself confers great good fortune, and you were resolute in the practice of austerities. I am pleased with you, since you, wishing to create the worlds, described Me as being really unconditioned, though seemingly possessed of all qualities. All blessings shall come to you. I, who have the power to grant all boons, shall be instantly pleased with him who worships Me after reciting this hymn every day. It is the conviction of those who know the truth, that the supreme gain that accrues to any man from the performance of good works, the practice of austerities, the offering of sacrifices, the making of gifts, and settled *yogic* contemplation, is that he propitiates Me. I am the Soul in all *jīvas* conditioned by the ego, O Creator, and dearer than the dearest. Therefore one should love Me, on

account of Whom one loves one's body and all else. Create as before by your own efforts—as you can, because you are begotten of Me and are the repository of all the Vedas—the worlds and the creatures who will people it, and who are now quiescent in Me' (37-43).

Maitreya said: Having thus shown the Creator the worlds he had to manifest, the Lord of the lotus navel, Who is paramount over Pradhāna and Purusha, hid from view His own proper person (the form of Narayana) (44).

CHAPTER X

THE TEN KINDS OF CREATION

Vidura asked: 'When the exalted Lord had vanished from view, what were the different kinds of creatures—those born of the body, and those engendered by an act of will—which Brahmā, the capable One, the Grand-sire of the worlds, created? And may it please you, who are first among men of vast learning, to answer in due order, venerable sage, the questions that I asked, and thus dispel my doubts' (1-2).

The Sūta said: Thus begged by Kshattā, the sage Kaushārava was pleased, and he forthwith answered those questions, which he remembered very well, O scion of the Bhṛgu (3).

Maitreya said: Brahmā practised, as the Lord Who knows no birth had bidden him, austerities for a hundred celestial years, concentrating his mind on the Paramātman (Narayana). The Lotus-born, on seeing the lotus on which he was seated and the waters of the Deluge agitated by the force of the winds of the Dissolution, drank up the wind and the water by the power of knowledge he possessed, augmented by his mounting austerities and his worship of the Paramātman. As he looked at that lotus which he occupied, and which soared to the skies, he said to himself, 'With this I shall recreate the worlds (Bhūr, Bhuvah and Suvah) which have been submerged.' Directed by the Lord to do what was his own work, he entered the lotus and divided into three (worlds) that lotus which was large enough

to be divided into fourteen worlds or even more. It has been authoritatively stated that the worlds¹ inhabited by the *jīvas* comprise only these three. Brahmā himself, and his world, are the fruit of *karma* done without thought of reward (4-9).

Vidura here made a request: 'Be pleased to describe exactly, O Brahman, who know everything, that form of Hari, of the myriad forms and the marvellous deeds, which you spoke of as time' (10).

Maitreya said: Time is indicated by the succession of evolutes, Mahat and so on, resulting from the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas*. It has no distinguishing marks. It is without beginning or end. The Supreme Lord (Īśvara) created the universe out of Himself in sport, employing time as the efficient cause. The universe, which Vishnu abstracted within Himself by His own power of Māyā, and which had remained in its causal state as the Brahmā, was again made manifest by Īśvara out of Himself in a spirit of play through the instrumentality of time, which has no concrete form. The universe as it is to-day is what it was before the Deluge and what it shall be after the next Pralaya. Creation is of nine kinds—Prākṛta (primary) and Vaikṛta (secondary). That which partakes of the character of both is the tenth. There are three modes of dissolution—by time, by substance, and by the *guṇas* (11-14).

The first creation is that of Mahat, by the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* at the will of the Paramātmān (Hari). The second is the creation of the ego principle, from which originate the gross elements, the organs of sensation (as well as the gods who preside over them, and the mind), and the organs of action. The third creation is that of the subtle elements, which are the cause of the gross elements. The fourth is the creation of the organs of knowledge and action. The fifth is the creation of the gods (who control the organs) by the Vaikārika-ahamkāra and also of the mind by

¹ Where the *jīvas* experience the fruits of their *karma*. Brahmā's world (Satyaloka) as well as the three worlds immediately below that, are not destroyed and recreated at the end of every *Kalpa* like our earth, upper air and heaven, but last for the duration of Brahmā's life.

the same. The sixth creation is that of *tamas* (nescience) which obscures and misleads the intelligence of the *jīvas*, O noble one. These are the six creations of Prakṛti (11-17).

And now listen while I tell you of the Vaikṛta creations (that is, those effected by Brahmā). They were in fact undertaken in a spirit of play by Hari—Who, ensconced in one's heart, destroys *samsāra*—when He, using *rajo-guna* functioned as Brahmā. The seventh creation—the first of Brahmā's—was that of the world of the non-moving, and it was of six kinds. The six varieties of stationary things are trees that fruit without flowering, annuals, climbing vines, hard grasses like bamboo, shrubs and creepers, and trees that put forth flowers and fruits. They draw their nutriment from below; they are for all practical purposes insentient, except that they are conscious of touch, though they cannot show it; and they are of many species. The eighth creation is that of those in whom the current of nutrition tends transversely (that is, of birds and beasts); this is of twenty-eight kinds. These creatures have no conception of time; they are immersed in ignorance, sensitive only to smells, and incapable of thought. The cow, the goat, the buffalo, the black deer, the pig, the *gavaya*, the *ruru*, the sheep and the camel—these nine are cloven-hooved beasts, O best of men. The ass, the horse, the mule, the *gaur*, the *śarabha*, the yak—these six are whole-hoofed, O Kshattā. And now I will tell you of the five-clawed beasts. These are the dog, the jackal, the wolf, the tiger, the cat, the rabbit, the porcupine, the lion, the monkey, the elephant, the tortoise and the iguana; besides, there are the alligator and the like. The heron, the vulture, the *vata*, the eagle, the hawk, the bear, the peacock, the swan, the *sāras* crane, the *chakravāka*, the crow, the owl, and so on, are the birds that move in the air (17-24).

The ninth creation is that of men, who¹ take aliment through their mouths. They constitute only one species, O Kshattā. They have an excess of *rajas* in their composition. They are addicted to activity, and imagine themselves happy in their misery (25).

These three creations are the work of Brahmā alone,

¹ (Lit.) 'the course of whose nutrition is downward.'

and so, too, is the creation of the gods, O best of men. The creation of the gods, of which I spoke earlier, referred to the gods who were created from the Sāttvika-ahamkāra of Prakṛti by the Lord Himself. The creation of the Kumāras partakes of the character of both.¹ The eight kinds of celestials are the gods, the manes, the Asuras, the Gandharvas and Apsarases, the Yakshas and Rākshasas, the Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Vidyādhara, the goblins, spirits of the dead and ghouls, and the Kinnaras, and such like (26-28).

So far, I have told you, O Vidura, of the ten kinds of beings created by the Creator of the worlds. I shall (presently) describe the lines of kings and the epochs of the Manus. At the beginning of every Kalpa, Hari united with *rajas*, in the person of the Self-existent (Brahmā), creates in the manner aforesaid Himself by Himself out of Himself, and by His own free will, carrying out His indefeasible purpose (28-29).

(The wise do not care to dogmatize on which creation comes first. Because it is due to the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* caused by the all-powerful Māyā of the Supreme Lord, it is no more possible to be certain of this than to assert where one whirlpool ends and another begins. The gods, Asuras and such like, who have been described as existing in this Kalpa, O Kshattā, existed with the same names and forms in a previous Manvantara.)²

CHAPTER XI

NATURE AND MEASUREMENT OF TIME

Maitreya said : The ultimate particle of any object in creation, infinitesimal, unchanged, uncombined and indestructible, is known as a *paramāṇu* (atom). It is the aggregation of these particles that is responsible for erroneous notions of wholes and parts. The universe

¹ 'For they are partly gods, partly men' (S) Sanatkumāra and the rest are created not in every Kalpa, but only in the first Kalpa of Brahmā's life. ² The two verses are found in only some texts. Of the commentators, only R. and M. notice them. The rendering follows M.

in its totality, made up of such particles, and undistinguished by particulars or difference, is, in its unchanged state, known as *Parama-mahān* ('the infinitely great'). The existence of time, both in a minute and massive form, is likewise inferred, O best of men, from the fact that it determines and circumscribes all that exists, big and small. For while it is itself too minute to be seen, it does (as a power of the Lord, which may not be distinguished from the Lord Himself) pervade and override all things. The time which it takes (for the sun) to traverse a *paramāṇu* of substance is a *paramāṇu* of time. The time which is required (by the sun) to traverse the entire universe, is time in its massive form (1-4).

Two atoms constitute an *aṇu*, three *aṇus* a *trasareṇu*. The last may be known from the mote of dust in the sunbeam entering through a chink, which (is so light that it) floats upward and is gone. The time taken by the sun to transit three *trasareṇus* is a *truti*. A 'vedha' consists of a hundred 'trutis'. Three 'vedhas' make one 'lava'. Three 'lavas' constitute a 'nimesha' (the twinkling of the eye); three 'nimeshas' a 'kshaṇa'. Five 'kshaṇas' are a 'kāshthā'. Fifteen 'kāshthās' are a 'laghu'; fifteen 'laghus' are a 'nādikā'. Two 'nādikās' constitute a 'muhūrta'. Six or seven 'nādikās' make a 'prahara'. That is known to men as a 'yāma' (a watch of the day or night). The time it takes for a vessel with a capacity of one 'prastha'¹, made of six 'palas' of copper, with a hole at the bottom made by a four-inch-long punch fashioned from gold weighing four 'māshas', to get filled (when placed in water), and be submerged, is a *nādikā*. Men reckon a day and a night as four *yāmas* each. Fifteen days constitute a *paksha*. There are two *pakshas*, dark and bright, and they together make a month, O courteous one. The month is the equivalent of a day and a night for the manes. Two months cover a season, six an 'ayana', of which there are two, 'South' and 'North'. For the world of the celestials the two 'ayanas' are a day and a night. Twelve months are spoken of as a year. It has been said that a hundred years is the full span of the life of men (5-12).

¹ A measure of varying capacity.

Moving along the zodiacal belt, with its planets, constellations and fixed stars, all-powerful time in the form of the sun makes a round of the entire globe in the course of a year, of which the basic unit is a *paramāṇu* of time. The year is termed variously as *samvatsara*, *parivatsara*, *idāvatsara*, *anuvatsara* and *vatsara*¹, O Vidura. All men should worship him (the sun-god) who determines the five kinds of year and appears as that orb of light which swiftly traverses the heavens, multiplying and quickening the fertility of all things by his own power and dispelling the delusions of men², while enabling those, who so desire, to reap the fruits of *karma* by the many rites prescribed in this behalf (13-15).

Here Vidura prayed, 'You have indicated what is the full span of life of men, manes and gods. Be pleased to tell of the length of life of the enlightened souls who live outside the three worlds. Assuredly the blessed one knows the truth of the exalted Lord in His manifestation as time; for men who have won self-control see the entire universe by the power of vision gained by yoga' (16-17).

Maitreya said: The cycle of four 'yugas', Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali, leaving out the transition periods before the beginning and at the end of each *yuga* (known respectively as the *sandhyā* and the *sandhyāmsā*) has been described as covering twelve thousand celestial years; the Kṛta-yuga lasting for four thousand years, the Tretā for three thousand, the Dvāpara for two thousand, and Kali for a thousand years, respectively. The *sandhyā* and the *sandhyāmsā* of Kṛta have eight hundred, of Tretā six hundred, of Dvāpara four hundred and of Kali two hundred years besides; sharing this extra period equally. The learned consider that period only as the *yuga* proper which lies between these two extremities, as only then are the specific *dharma*s of each *yuga* to be practised. In Kṛta-yuga, Dharma is to be found in its plenary form among men. In the other *yugas* it declines progressively, losing one part (quarter) in every *yuga*, owing to Adharma correspondingly increasing. In the

¹ Depending on the system of reckoning followed, based on the transit of the sun, the moon, Jupiter etc. ² By demonstrating the transitoriness of life.

worlds beyond the three worlds, including Brahmā's, a thousand four-*yuga* cycles constitute one day. And one night there lasts as long, my son, during which the Creator of the universe sleeps. The creation of the world is begun when the night is ended, and that world lasts a whole day of his life, spanning the reigns of fourteen Manus. Each Manu reigns for a little over seventy-one four-*yuga* cycles. In the various Manvantaras, the Manus are followed by their descendants who rule the earth successively ; while the sages, the gods, the rulers of the celestials (that is, the Indras), and their attendants all come into being and continue as contemporaries (18-24).

Such is the daily creation effected by Brahmā, which concerns the three worlds. It is in this daily creation that the sub-human orders, as well as men, the manes and the gods are born as the result of their past *karmas*. In the Manvantaras the exalted Lord, incarnate with bodies of pure *sattva*, protects the universe along with the Manus and the rest, manifesting His prowess. At the end of the day, the Lord¹, utilising a fraction of *tamas*, ceases from activity, and all creatures being absorbed in Him by force of time, remains quiescent. Thereupon the three worlds vanish from view, as the night sets in, with neither the moon nor the sun shining. When these worlds are being burnt up by the Lord's power, the fire from the mouth of Sankarshana, Bhṛgu and others, oppressed by the heat, move up from the Maharloka to the Jana-loka. And the oceans, rising by the force of the Dissolution, and boiling in a fierce tumult, their billows driven by high winds, submerge the three worlds instantly. In the heart of those waters rests Hari with Ananta for His couch, His eyes closed in *yogic* slumber, while those who dwell in Jana-loka sing His praises. Even Brahmā's life, which exceeds that of all other creatures, running to a hundred years of days and nights whose duration has been reckoned above, has now been practically consumed. At the commencement of the first *parārdha* of his life came the Mahākalpa known as Brāhma, in which appeared Brahmā,

¹ This might refer to both the Paramātmān and to Brahmā, since Brahmā's sleep lasts for the same time as the Lord's *yogic* slumber.

who was the embodiment of the Veda. Towards the end of the same half came the Kalpa known as the Pādma, when the world-lotus appeared in the lake of Hari's navel. The current Kalpa, at the beginning of the second half of Brahmā's life, is known as the Vārāha-kalpa, since Hari was incarnate in it as a boar (25-36).

The period of two *parārdhas* is metaphorically¹ spoken of as constituting a mere twinkling of the eye in the life of the Lord Who is the cause of the universe, Who knows no mutation, Who has neither beginning nor end. Though time, which ranges from the *paramāṇu* to the two *parārdhas*, has paramount power over all those who identify themselves with the body and the like, it is powerless against Him Who is Perfection itself. When the cosmic egg, which is produced by the combination of the sixteen *vikṛtis* (evolutes) with the eight *prakṛtis* (evolvents), and is five hundred millions of *yojanas* in extent inside, and covered with seven sheaths, the earth and the rest, each ten times the size of that which it covers—when this cosmos enters Him Who contains all that is, it appears no bigger than a *paramāṇu*, and there are crores of other such Brahmāndas in Him. That perfect Being is spoken of by the Vedas as the immutable (Akshara) Brahmā, the Cause of all causes, the Essential Self of Vishnu, the Almighty Lord (37-41).

CHAPTER XII

BRAHMĀ'S MANIFOLD CREATION

Maitreya went on: I have told you, O Kshattā, of the glorious attribute of the Supreme Lord, which is known as time. You shall now hear how he, who is the repository of the Vedas, went about his work of creation. The first of the creators produced in the beginning, 'Andha-tāmisra', then 'Tāmisra', 'Mahāmoha', 'Moha' and 'Tamas'—all modes of nescience.² Looking at those evil creations, he was not pleased with himself. Then, with his mind purified by meditation on the exalted Lord, he created others, Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana

¹ Because He is really outside time. ² The commentators reverse the order conformably to that given in V.P., which S. quotes.

and Sanātkumāra, the celibate sages who refrained from all works. The Self-existent told those sons of his, 'Propagate progeny, my children.' But they, being devoted to Vāsudeva, and intent on the Dharma that leads to emancipation, were averse to doing so. He tried to control the rage he felt at being thus slighted by his sons, who disobeyed his wishes. But though he sought to suppress it by the exercise of discrimination, his wrath emerged from him instantly at the junction of the eyebrows, taking the form of a young boy with a purple complexion. It was none other than the exalted Lord Bhava, Who was born before all the gods ; and He cried aloud, saying, 'Give me names and stations, O Father and Creator of the worlds.' The Lotus-born was agreeable ; and he assured Him affectionately, 'I shall do what you want, don't you weep. Because you cried like a frightened child, O foremost of the gods, men will call you Rudra. I have already appointed as your stations the mind, the senses, the vital breath, outer space, air, fire, water, earth, the sun, the moon and austerities. You shall go by the names of Manyu, Manu, Maheśāna, Mahān, Śiva, Rādhwaja, Ugrareta, Bhava, Kāla, Vāmadeva, and Dhṛtavrata. And you, Rudra, shall have for your divine spouses the Rudrāṇis, Dhī, Vṛitti, Uśanā, Umā, Niyut, Śarpis, Ilā, Ambikā, Irāvati, Sudhā and Dikshā. Accept these names and stations, and with your wives bring forth children, for you are one of the Patriarchs'. (1-14).

Thus bidden by His father, the exalted Lord, He of the purple complexion, brought forth children who resembled Him in strength, appearance and disposition. On seeing the countless hosts of Rudras, brought forth by Rudra, falling upon the worlds and devouring them, the Great Progenitor was alarmed. 'Enough of progeny such as these, O best of gods, who burn the four quarters and me with their fiery eyes. Engage in austerities, which will bring happiness to all beings, and may all good attend you ! By such austerities, you will be able to create the world as before. It is by austerities alone that one may easily discover the Lord Who is beyond the reach of the senses, the Light Supernal that shines in the cave of the heart in all beings' (15-19).

Maitreya went on : Thus told by the Self-existent, He circumbulated the Lord of Speech and took leave of him saying, 'It shall be done.' And He proceeded to the penitential woods for practising austerities. Then, as Brahmā, filled with the power of the Lord, bent his thoughts again on creation, ten sons were born to him. These were responsible for the generations of progeny that have peopled the earth. They were Marīchi, Atri, Angiras, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Vasishta, Daksha and Nārada, who was the tenth. Nārada was born from the lap of the Self-existent, Daksha from the thumb, Vasishta from the life-breath, Bhṛgu from the skin, Kratu from the hand, Pulaha from the navel, the sage Pulasthya from the ears, Angiras from the mouth, Atri from the eyes, and Marīchi from the mind. Dharma, to whom Narayana Himself was born, was created from the right breast, and Adharma, the father of Death, of whom all the world goes in dread, from the back. From the heart was born desire, from the brows anger, from the lower lip covetousness, from the mouth speech, from the genitals the oceans, and from the anus Nirṛti, the abode of sin. From his shadow was born the powerful Kardama, who married Devahūti. Thus the universe was born from the mind and the body of the Creator (20-27).

We have heard it said, O Kshattā, that the Self-existent desired to take to his bed his beautiful daughter Vāk (speech)¹, drawn to her by her ravishing beauty, though she did not desire him. Seeing their father intent on doing what was not lawful, his sons, Marīchi and others, ventured confidently to remind him of his duty from their sincere concern. 'Your forerunners did not do, nor will your successors do, what you will be doing if you lie with your daughter, instead of controlling your passion, which you are perfectly able to do. Such an act will not redound to the credit of even those who have superhuman powers, O Father of the worlds; for the world of men depends for its abiding welfare on following in the footsteps of such². Salutations to the exalted Lord Who, by a splendid act of will, manifested

¹ This is secular speech, not the Veda. - ² And therefore the greater is their responsibility for setting a right example.

this universe, which had remained abstracted within Him. He should safeguard Dharma.' Seeing his sons, the patriarchs, standing before him and exhorting him thus, the Lord of the Progenitors was overcome by shame, and he cast off his body¹. The four quarters received that unlovely body, which is the darkness known as mist (28-33).

Once the Creator was considering in his mind the question, 'How shall I create as before the worlds well-co-ordinated with each other?' Thereupon the Vedas issued from his four mouths, and also the functions of the four priests and the procedure of the sacrifice, the Upa-Vedas and the Nyāyas, the four quarters of Dharma, the *āśramas* (stages of life) and their occupations (34-35).

Vidura here made a request. 'You have said that the Lord of the Creators of the worlds gave out the Vedas and the rest through his different mouths. Tell me, O sage who are rich in austerities, of the mouth from which each of the different Vedas issued' (36).

Maitreya answered him thus: He gave out through his four mouths in due order, beginning with that which faces east, the Rk, Yajus, Sāma, and Atharva Vedas respectively, as well as the different functions of the sacrificial priests—*śastra* (recital of the panegyric hymns), *ijyā* (offering of oblations), *stuti-stoma* (chanting of the Sāman, with recital of the text of the verses) and *prāyaschittam* (rectification of mistakes). And in the same order he also gave out the subsidiary Vedas, in which are expounded the sciences of Longevity, of War, of Music, and of Architecture. The omniscient Lord gave out through all his mouths the fifth Veda comprising the epic and the Purāṇas. He gave out the sacrificial rites—the 'Shodasi' and the 'Uktha' through the eastern mouth, the 'Purishi-chayana' and the 'Agnishtoma' through the southern, the 'Aptoryāma' and the 'Atirātra' through the western, and the 'Vājapeya' and the 'Gosava' through the northern. He created in the same order the four quarters of Dharma—knowledge,

¹ Brahmā's 'death' here should be taken figuratively; it merely means that he discarded that passion.

liberality, austerities and truth-speaking¹ —and also the *āśramas*, their modes of life and occupations. These involved (in the case of the student) the observance of celibacy and other vows, which were of four different types, *Sāvitra*, *Prājāpatya*, *Brāhma* and *Bṛhat*. The modes of life prescribed for the householder were (the unobjectionable kind of) husbandry and trade, earning by teaching and by the conducting of sacrifices, living on chance gains, and picking up ears of grain dropped by the wayside in the shopping areas, or left ungarnered in the fields. There are four different classes of forest-dwelling hermits, the *Vaikhānasas*, the *Vālakhilyas*, the *Audumbaras* and the *Phenapās*. (The different modes of livelihood prescribed for them are subsistence on whatever grows wild on untilled land; on food gathered fresh when what had been previously gathered is thrown away; on fruits and other such things gathered from the direction which they face as they get up of a morning; and on fruits etc., fallen from the trees). Among *sannyāsins* too there are four different orders, the *Kutichakas*, the *Bahūdakas*, the *Hamsas* and the *Nishkriyas* (*Paramahamsas*) (37-43).

The Creator created in the same order *Ānvikshikī* (the science of discriminating knowledge that leads to *moksha*), the *Karma-kānda* of the *Vedas* (propagating *Dharma*), the science of Economics, and that of Statecraft. In like manner were given out the *Vyāhrtis* ('*Bhūr*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah*' composing the mystic formula pronounced with *Om*). From the space in his heart issued the *Praṇava*. From the hair of the powerful Creator came (the metre) *Ushnik*, from his skin the *Gāyatrī*, from his flesh *Trishtubh*, from the tendons *Anushtubh*, and from the bones of the Creator the *Jagatī*. From his marrow was produced the *Pankti*, and from his life-breath the *Bṛhatī*. The consonants constituted his life, the vowels his body; the *ūshmas* (*śa*, *sha*, *sa* and *ha* and the *Anuswara*), are spoken of as his senses, the semi-vowels (*ya*, *ra*, *la*, *va*) as his strength. The seven notes of the gamut proceeded from the play of the Great Progenitor. To *Brahmā*,

¹ For knowledge and liberality, S. substitutes purity and compassion as not being inconsistent with Book I, see p. 68 *ante*.

who has the Sabda-Brahma, consisting of the unmanifest (Praṇava) and the manifest (Vaikhari), for his body, the supreme and transcendent Lord shows Himself both as the plenary Brahma, the One without a second, and as the Supreme Lord, in His many forms¹ representative of His infinite powers (44-48).

Then, assuming another body, he (Brahmā) applied his mind again to the task of creation. Seeing that the *rishis*, though they possessed tremendous virility, had not been able to produce a large progeny, he pondered about the cause. 'It is indeed astonishing' he thought, 'that though I constantly exert myself in this behalf, there is no increase of population; surely destiny stands in the way!' As he, doing what was proper, prayerfully waited upon the will of Providence, that body of Brahmā split into two halves; since then everybody is called 'kāya'². Out of those two parts were born a pair, a male and a female. The male became Svāyambhuva Manu, the emperor, and the female, known as Śatarūpā, became the queen of that mighty potentate. Thereafter, by the pairing of couples, there was a great increase of progeny. And he (Manu) begot five children on Śatarūpā—Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, and three daughters, Ākūti, Devahūti and Prasūti, O scion of the Bharatas and best of men. He gave away Ākūti in marriage to Ruchi, the second daughter to Kardama, and Prasūti to Daksha. By their progeny the world was filled (49-56).

CHAPTER XIII

VISHNU AS BOAR LIFTS UP THE EARTH

Srī Suka said : Hearing the sage's thrice-holy words, O King, the scion of the Kurus again questioned him, eager to hear of Vāsudeva's doings: 'What did the emperor, the dearly beloved son of the Self-existent, do, having got a wife whom he loved, O sage? Please tell me, who listen attentively, O best of men, of the doings of that royal sage, the first King. For he put

¹ Such as Indra and the rest. ² 'Ka' being one of the names of Brahmā, all bodies that came thereafter were given that name.

his faith wholly in the Lord Vishvaksena. Have not the learned lauded the study of the Sāstras, which require such long years of application, because they hold that the chief gain therefrom is that one comes to hear the praises of those who cherish Mukunda's lotus feet in their hearts?' (1-4).

Sri Suka said: When the deferential Vidura, whose lap had pillowed Sṛī Krishna's feet, said this, the sage, who was thus prompted to speak of the doings of the Lord, was thrilled. Answering him, Maitreya said: The moment Manu, the son of the Self-existent, was born along with his wife, he bowed his head humbly to Brahmā and addressed him with folded hands: 'Thou art the sole parent of all beings, their begetter and provider. How, then, shall we, Thy children, serve Thee? Be pleased, O Lord that art worthy of all praise, to specify by what *karma*, which lies within our capacity, we may serve Thee and achieve renown everywhere in this world and bliss in the next? I make my salutations to Thee' (5-8).

Brahmā told him, 'I am pleased with you, my child, because you have requested me of your own accord, and in all sincerity, to command you; may all good attend both of you, O master of the earth. It is by obeying his commands to the best of their ability, attentively, zealously and without malice, that one's children should honour one, O valiant man. Beget offspring on this spouse of yours, who would be your equal in virtue, and rule the earth righteously, worshipping the Supreme Lord with the offering of sacrifices. By ruling the earth you will be doing me the highest service, O King; and the exalted Lord Hṛshikeśa will be pleased with you, the protector of your people. Those with whom the Lord Janārdana, bodied forth in the sacrifice, is not pleased, will find all their labour wasted, because they have disregarded their own Self' (9-13).

Manu answered, 'I shall abide by Thy command, O destroyer of sins; only please direct me where my people and I shall dwell, O Lord. Since the earth, the dwelling place of all creatures, lies submerged in the great deluge, be pleased to initiate efforts to lift her up' (14-15).

Maitreya went on : The supreme Creator, seeing the earth submerged in the waters, pondered long as to how she might be lifted up. ' While I was engaged in the work of creation, the earth, overrun by the waters, entered the nether regions. What should we, who are entrusted with the task of creation, do now ? May the Lord, by Whose will I came into existence, show the way out of this difficulty.' As he thus pondered, a tiny boar cub of the size of a thumb emerged suddenly from his nostril, O flawless one. The boar, standing in mid air, grew before his eyes in a trice to the size of an elephant, a marvellous sight. As he looked at the seeming boar along with Marichi and other Brahmanas, the Kumāras and Manu, he wondered what it might be. ' What could this supernatural being be, that stands before me in the guise of a boar ? How astounding that it should have come out of my nostril ! When I first saw it, it was just the size of the head of a thumb ; in a trice it has become as big as a huge rock. Could it be the exalted Lord, the God of the Sacrifice Himself, Who thus confounds me ? ' (16-22).

While Brahmā and his sons were thus debating among themselves, the Lord of the Sacrifice, huge as a mountain, roared. Hari, the All-pervading Lord, made the hearts of Brahmā and the Brahmanas rejoice by that roar of His, which the four quarters echoed. On hearing that grunt of the seeming boar, which dispelled their anxieties, the sages of the Jana-loka, Tapo-loka and Satya-loka, extolled Him by chanting the hymns of the holy Vedas. Hearing the Vedas, which only chronicled His own virtues, recited by those blessed souls, the Lord, Whose body is the Sacrifice that is performed according to the Veda, roared again, and playful as a lordly tusker, entered the waters to promote the welfare of the gods. As He ranged the sky with tail upraised, and shook His mane, scattering the clouds with His hooves, the Lord Who was to lift up the earth shone with a body hard as nails, His skin covered with bristles, His white tusks gleaming and His eyes like great lights. The Lord Who had taken the semblance of a boar—while in truth the sacrifice constituted His body—the fierceness of whose tusks was belied by the gracious look

He bent on the Brahmanas who were extolling Him, plunged into the water, smelling His way to the earth. The ocean, its belly mangled by the thrust of that mountainous body hard as adamant, seemed to wail in distress, as it wildly flung out its long billows like arms, crying, 'Save me, O Lord of the sacrifice !' He Who had for limbs the three sections of the sacrifice, clove the boundless waters with His hooves, which resembled razer-sharp arrows, and beheld close by the Rasātala region, the earth, the support of all living beings, which He had carried within Himself when He wished to sleep there at the time of the Dissolution. He shone in all His splendour as He rose up from the Rasātala, lifting up the submerged earth with His tusk. When the Asura of the formidable valour confronted Him with his mace and barred the way, His anger blazed like His own discus, and He effortlessly struck him down in the water as the lion does the elephant. And His cheeks and snout were splashed with his blood, as is the elephant with mire when it roots in the earth (23-32).

On seeing the Lord, black as the *tamāla* tree, raising up the earth playfully with the tip of His white tusk, like a frolicking elephant, the sages, with Brahmā at their head, extolled Him, my dear, with folded hands in words of like import with the words of the Vedic hymns (33).

The sages said : 'Thou hast indeed conquered, O invincible Lord That art worshipped by the offering of sacrifices. Salutations to Thee That shakest this body of Thine, which is composed of the three Vedas. Salutations to Thee That hast assumed the semblance of a boar of set purpose, and hast sacrifices hidden away in every pore of that body. It is altogether impossible for men who have sinned in their hearts to set eyes on this body of Thine, O God, made up of the sacrifice, with the Vedic metres for skin, and *kusa* grass for bristles, with clarified butter for eyes and the functions of the four priests for feet ; with the ladle for snout, the spoons for nostrils, the vessel holding the food for belly, the *soma* cup for the orifices of the ears, the vessel containing the Brahmā's portion of the oblations for mouth, and the *soma* ladles for throat. The *agnihotra* is Thy act of chewing, O Lord, the *ishti* (oblations) made at the time of taking

vows is Thy repeated descent into this world; the (three) *upasadas* are Thy neck. The oblations offered after vows are taken, and those offered before the concluding rites of the sacrifice, are Thy two tusks. The *pravargya* is Thy tongue. The *Sabhya* and the *Āvasathya* (the fire in which no *homa* is done, and the fire of the *aupāsana*) constitute together Thy head in the form Thou takest as the sacrifice. The piling up of bricks to form the sacrificial altars is Thy (five) vital airs. The *soma* juice is Thy virility, and the three *savanas* are Thy postures. The seven classes of sacrifices are the seven constituent elements of Thy body, O God of gods. All the sacrifices (*sattras*) that last for many days are Thy bodily joints. Thou art the sacrifices with and without the *soma* offering; the acts of sacrifice are Thy tendons. We offer our repeated salutations to Thee That art the incantations, the gods and the substances, That art all the sacrifices and all the activities there are. Salutations to Thee That art the knowledge intuited when the mind is steadied as the result of devotion won by the cleansing of the heart through the disinterested performance of *karma*; and Thou art the Guru Who imparts such enlightenment. O Lord That art the Supporter of the earth with its mountains, it shines, as Thou carriest it on the tip of Thy tusk; like the lotus plant with its leaves, carried by the lordly tusker in rut as it comes out of the water. And this form of Thine which, though in the semblance of a boar, is made up of the three Vedas, is, as it carries the globe on its tusk, as fascinating a sight as a great mountain range crowned with the rain-cloud (34-41).

‘Please establish the earth, Thy spouse and the mother of all things, stationary and moving, so that they could dwell thereon. For Thou art their father, and Thou hast deposited in her Thy power to uphold and sustain, as in the fire-stick the fire is sustained by the sacrificers by the power of incantations; and we shall all bow in adoration to her and to Thee. Who, O Lord, other than Thee could even dream of lifting up, as Thou hast done, the earth that had sunk down to the *Rasātala*? But this comes as no surprise where Thou art concerned, for in Thee are all marvels; Thou hast created this most

wondrous universe by Thy Power of Māyā. We, the residents of the Jana-loka, Tapo-loka and Satya-loka, sprinkled with the drops of water from the tips of the hair on Thy mane when Thou shookest Thy body, which is formed of the Vedas, have been supremely sanctified. He who aspires to know all about Thy exploits, when there is really no end to them, can only be regarded as one who has taken leave of his senses. Be pleased, O Lord, to ordain the welfare of all the universe, which lies tranced under the influence of Thy Yoga-Maya combined with the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*' (42-45).

Maitreya said : Thus extolled by the sages who were well-versed in the Vedas, He, the Protector of the worlds, placed the earth on the water that He trod with His hooves. Having thus effortlessly lifted up the earth from the Rasātala and planted it on the water, the exalted Lord Hari, Whose forces are everywhere and Who is the Protector of the universe, vanished from view. He who hears with devotion, or relates to others this auspicious and charming tale of Hari, thinking of Whom one is freed from the trammels of *samsāra*, and Whose miraculous powers are supremely worth expatiating upon, quickly propitiates Janārdana, Who is seated in his heart. When He Who can bestow all that the heart could desire, is pleased, what is there that cannot be attained ? But let no one hanker after such trifles. The Lord seated in the cave of the heart confers on those who worship Him with no ulterior ends in view, the supreme blessing of attaining Himself. Who, indeed, that is not a mere animal and that knows the highest aim of life, will feel that he has had enough of it, once he has chanced to absorb, through the ear, during the recital of tales of the past, the nectar that is the glorious tale of the Lord, which destroys the cycle of birth and death ? (46-50).

CHAPTER XIV

HIRANYĀKSHA AND HIRANYAKASIPU

Sri Suka said: Having heard from the lips of Kaushāravi (Maitreya) the story of Hari Who had taken the form of a boar for a particular purpose, Vidura, the dedicated soul, questioned him again with folded hands, not content with what he had heard. Vidura said: 'I have heard you say, O best of sages, that the first Asura, Hiranyāksha, was slain by Hari in that very incarnation of His as the embodiment of the sacrifice. Why did he battle with the King of the Daityas, O Brahman, when He playfully engaged in lifting up the earth with the tip of His tusk?' (1-3).

Maitreya replied: You have done well, O valiant one, in asking this question concerning this incarnation of Hari, since it should help mortals to snap the noose of death. It was because the son of Uttānapāda heard, while yet a child, the glories of Hari recounted by the sage, that he was able to plant his foot on the head of death and ascend to the abode of Hari. I have heard a story, bearing on this matter, related by Brahmā to the gods, who hold him in reverence, in answer to their question (4-6).

Diti, the daughter of Daksha, who desired a son, approached her husband Kaśyapa, the son of Marīchi, at the twilight hour, O Kshattā, longing for union with him, under the urge of passion. He was sitting in the fire-chamber, engaged in meditation when the sun was setting, after having worshipped the Supreme Lord, the Lord of the sacrifice, who has fire for His tongue, with milk. She importuned him saying, 'Here is the god of love, armed with the bow, tormenting poor me, having me in his power because of you, O wise one, even as the elephant attacks the plantain. Therefore be pleased to bestow your favour on me, who burn with envy at the sight of my happy and prosperous rivals, who are blessed with children; may all good attend you! The fame of women who have won the love and esteem of their spouses spreads to all the worlds, especially when they have a husband like you reborn in their sons,

In days far past, our father, the blessed Daksha, who loved his daughters, asked each one of us, 'Whom would you like to wed?' And he, who wanted that his daughters should have children, gave away thirteen of us to you in marriage, divining our inclination to you because of your virtues. Therefore, O auspicious lord of the lotus eyes, grant me my wish, The appeals of those in distress never go in vain, perfect one, when addressed to the supremely great!' (7-14).

When the poor woman, bemused by her mounting passion, thus blabbed, Kaśyapa, the son of Marichi, sought to pacify her with soothing words O valiant one. 'I shall do what you dearly wish, my gentle one; who would not fulfil the desire of her through whom he realizes the three ends of life? The man who has a wife traverses the sea of sorrows as men cross the ocean in sea-going ships, helping the other orders also to do so by virtue of his position as a householder. The wife is described as the very half of the man who seeks his own lasting good, O honoured dame, for he goes about care-free, placing his own burden upon her shoulders; with her support we find it child's play to defeat those enemies, the senses, as the lords of fortified towns do marauders, while those who belong to other *āśramas* find it so hard to withstand them. Such are you, O mistress of my home; and we could never hope to requite you even if we tried for a whole lifetime; nor indeed can anyone else who is partial to virtue. Still I shall do your wish, for raising a son. Only, wait for a little while, so that I may not draw the censure of the world upon myself (15-21).

'This is the most frightful hour of the day; for it is not only horrid in itself, it is the hour when horrid things are seen, the hour when those goblins and spirits which attend on the Lord of the elementals are abroad. At this hour of dusk, good lady, the exalted Lord (Siva) Who loves all creatures, and Who rules all spirits, goes on progress, riding His bull and attended by His retinue of elementals. With His flying matted locks, whose natural brightness is overlaid by the smoky dust of the burning-ground raised by the whirlwind, and His body of a pure golden hue covered with ashes, the Great

God, your brother-in-law, now bends upon the world His three eyes. To Him no-one in the world is kin or alien. There is none to whom He is partial or whom He condemns. The opulence of His Yoga-Māyā, which He has tossed aside with His foot, as one discards a pleasured use that one is tired of, is one which, we poor creatures, are so solicitous to win by His grace by the practice of the most rigorous vows. He, Whose flawless conduct is extolled by intelligent men, who would break through the massed clouds of nescience; He, the Goal of the good, lives like the fiends, though there is none who is His equal or His superior. It is the evil-minded who pamper, as if it were their own Self, this body, the destined food of dogs, with fine clothes and flowers, with jewels and unguents—it is they, who, not knowing His real mind, mock the doings of Him Whose delight is wholly in the Self. He, Who has established the norms of Dharma, which it is the duty of Brahmā and others to safeguard, Who is the Cause of this universe coming into being, Whose bidding Māyā carries out—that He should elect to live like a Pisācha is something which, to us, must always remain the inscrutable mystery of the Paramount Lord of the universe' (22-28).

Maitreya said: But she, though thus reminded by her husband, tugged at the garment of the Brahmarshi, shamelessly like a harlot, her senses overwhelmed by passion. And he, seeing his wife insistent on getting him to do what was wrong, bowed to fate and had secret intercourse with her. He then bathed, did *prāṇāyāma* and silently meditating on the Light of lights, recited the eternal *Pranava*. As for Diti, she was ashamed of her conduct, O scion of the Bharatas. She approached the Brahmana sage and, hanging down her head, addressed him thus (29-32).

Diti said, 'May He who is the Lord of all spirits spare the child in my womb, O Brahman; for Rudra, against whom I have offended, is the protector of all beings. Salutations to Rudra, the Great God, Who may not be crossed, Who chastises the wicked, Who is the Wrath that destroys the worlds, but Who showers all blessings on those that seek them of Him and bestows

the supreme felicity on the good, Who in truth never inflicts suffering. May the exalted Lord, the divine spouse of Satī, and our brother-in-law, Whose Grace is unbounded, forgive the trespasses of us women, who rouse the sympathy of even the cruel fouler' (33-35).

Maitreya said: When his wife, trembling with fear, prayed for blessings on her progeny, which would stand them in good stead in both worlds, the patriarch, who had finished his evening ablutions, answered her thus. Kāśyapa said, 'As the consequence of your mental impurity, the inauspiciousness of the hour, the disobedience to my will, and the gross affront shown to the gods, you will give birth, luckless creature, to two vicious and wicked sons. They will make the three worlds and their Guardians wail time and again, you cross-grained woman! When helpless and inoffensive creatures are slain, women are violated and the high-souled are roused to wrath, the exalted Lord, Hari the Ruler of the universe, Who loves all creatures, will be furious, and descending into this world, will slay them, as the Wielder of the thunderbolt strikes at the mountains' (36-40).

Diti said: 'I would rather welcome death for my sons at the hands of the exalted Lord Whose mighty hand wields the discus, my lord. I only pray that they may not be struck down by the wrath of the Brahmana. Neither those in hell nor those others whom he may encounter in any birth that he may take, will have any pity for him who has been burnt by the curse of the Brahmana, or has terrorized living beings' (41-42).

Kāśyapa told her, 'Because of your grief for the wrong you have done, your contrition and the dispassionate reflection it has induced in you, your reverence for the exalted Lord (Hari) and your affectionate regard for the great Lord Bhava and for me, one of the sons born to your son will win the esteem of the good. The world will extol his immaculate glory, as they do the glory of the Lord Himself. From the desire to emulate his virtues, good men will cleanse their hearts, even as gold is purified of its dross by processing, by the cultivation of non-enmity towards all creatures, and other like traits. By his exclusive devotion he will please

the Lord, the Self-luminous Witness in the heart ; and when He is propitious to one, the universe, whose soul He is, is propitious too. He, the supreme devotee of the Lord, who, with his limitless enlightenment and tremendous prowess, will be greater than the greatest, will give up all attachment to the body and the like, having lodged the Lord of Vaikuntha in his heart, purified by overflowing love. With his senses under control and his virtuous disposition, he will be a veritable storehouse of all noble qualities, rejoicing in others' prosperity, grieving to see others grieve. No born creature will be his enemy. He will dispel the sorrows of the world as the moon does the heat of summer. That grandson of yours will see everywhere, within and without him, the Lord, ever pure, of the lotus eyes, Who readily assumes that form which is agreeable to His devotees, Whose face is adorned by His flashing ear-pendants, Who is the ornament of the goddess Śrī, the paragon of beauty' (43-49).

Maitreya said : Diti rejoiced to hear that her grandson would be a devotee of the Lord ; it was with a sense of exaltation that she heard that her sons would meet with death at the hands of Krishna (Vishnu) (50).

CHAPTER XV

VISHNU'S ATTENDANTS CURSED

Maitreya went on : For a hundred years Diti contained within herself that potency of the patriarch which eclipsed the splendour of others, from the fear that it might cause suffering to the gods. When the lights of the universe were put out by it, the Guardians of the worlds, their lustre dimmed, informed the Creator that it was impossible, because of the inspissated gloom, to distinguish one quarter from another. The gods asked him, 'What do you think, O Omniscient Lord, this darkness means ? We are terribly frightened. There is nothing that is hidden from Thee, O Lord, Whose knowledge is untrammelled by time. O God¹ of gods,

¹ In this passage Brahmā is glorified as identical with the Supreme Lord.

Creator of the universe, Crest-jewel of the masters of the worlds, Thou knowest the minds of all creatures, high and low. Salutations to Thee That art armed with the power of intelligence, That hast taken this body, using Thy power of *Māyā*, and adopted the quality of *rajas*, and art the cause of the phenomenal universe. They know no discomfiture at the hands of any, who meditate with single-minded devotion on Thee, the Creator of all *jīvas*, on Whom are threaded all the worlds, and Who standest forth as the cause and the effect and yet art in reality different from both; for such men, having won control over the breath, the senses and the mind and perfected themselves in yoga, are the recipients of Thy grace. Salutations to Thee, the Chief controller,¹ by Whose word all men are controlled as oxen are by the nose-cord, and who bring Thee tributes, obedient to Thy will. Be pleased, O Lord That art perfect, to safeguard the welfare of those who are prevented from discharging their ordained duties by this darkness. Out of Thy abundant compassion, Thou shouldst cast Thy eye on us who are in dire peril. This embryo in Diti's womb, O Lord, being the virility deposited by Kaśyapa therein, grows apace, like fire in the dry log, enveloping all quarters in darkness' (1-10).

Maitreya said: The exalted Lord, the Self-existent, thus addressed by the gods, answered them with a laugh, O you of the mighty arm, making them happy with his engaging words. Brahmā said: 'My mind-born sons and your elder brothers, Sanaka and the rest, used to wander by air over the worlds at will, being absolutely unattached to them and their concerns. They once went to the realm of Vaikuntha, the home of the exalted Lord Vishnu, the Immaculate, revered by all the worlds. In that world live personages who are all like the Lord Vaikuntha Himself in appearance, and who worship Hari with disinterested devotion. There abides the exalted and primordial Lord Who may be known only through the Śāstra, with a form compact of pure *sattva*, as Dharma incarnate, conferring bliss on His devotees. Therein lies the wood named

¹ (alt.) 'That takest the form of the life-breath.'

Naiśrayasa, shining, like an embodiment of *Kaivalya*, with trees which bear their guerdon in all seasons and yield all that the heart could wish. There riders in aerial cars, along with their women, sing the doings of their lord and master, which dispel the sins of the world, disregarding the wind that carries the scent of the flowers of spring, which bloom in the waters and flow with honey, powerfully as it assails the senses. There the loud chatter of turtle-dove, koel and *sāras*-crane, of *chakravāka* and *chātaka*, of swan, parrot, partridge and peacock, stops for a brief moment when the leader of the swarm of bees hums aloud, as though they thought he was singing the praises of Hari. The *mandāra*, *kunda*, *tilaka*, blue lotus, *champaka*, *arṇa*, *punnāga*, *nāga-kesara*, *bakula*, red lotus and *parijāta* flowers in that wood esteem highly the austerities of the holy basil, which has won for her scent the partiality of Him who delights in adorning Himself with it (11-19).

Vaikuntha is filled with aerial cars, made of lapis lazuli, emerald and gold, which are at the disposal of those who merely bow their heads at the feet of Hari; the women attendants in them, with their massive hips and faces wreathed in smiles, do not incite, by their coy smiles and jests, passion in the breasts of those who cherish Krishna in their hearts. There the Goddess Śrī, with an extraordinarily beautiful form, looks, as she moves about in Hari's abode, her lotus feet tinkling with the sound of anklet bells, her hand twirling the sportive lotus, as if she were sweeping with her busy arm that mansion with its gold-bordered, crystalline walls—she to secure whose grace is the endeavour of many an other potentate and power. When the Goddess, attended by her retainers, is worshipping the Supreme Lord in her own wood with the holy basil, she sees the reflection of her face with its lovely locks and shapely nose in the sheets of water therein, with their banks of coral, and thinks, my children, that she sees the remnants of the feast that the Lord has enjoyed (20-22).

To that Vaikuntha never go those who lend their ears to worthless tales which unsettle the mind because they deal with matters other than the doings of Him Who destroys sins. Those tales, alas, throw the

unfortunates who hear them, after dissipating their accumulated merits, into hells where they will find no succour. That those who have achieved birth in the world of men, for which the like of us yearn, since one may gain there knowledge of Truth (Reality) as well as Dharma, do not offer worship to the Lord because their minds are bewildered—this, alas, must be due to the fact that they are caught in the Māyā that He spreads like a net ! But to that Vaikuntha go those who¹ have gone far beyond the disciplines of *yama* and *niyama*, because of their devoted attachment to Him, the foremost of the gods ; who are far superior to us ; whose virtuous disposition should be an object of emulation to all others ; who, as they praise to each other the unsullied fame of the Lord, forget themselves in an ecstasy of love, as the tears start to their eyes and the hair on the body stands on end (23-25).

Great was the rejoicing among the sages when they reached, by their *yogic* power, Vaikuntha, incomparable and supernal, the abode of the Lord of the universe, fit object of reverence for all the worlds, resplendent with the marvellous aerial cars of the foremost gods. Passing through the gateways of six enclosures without lingering there, the sages found, at the seventh, two gods of the same age, armed with the mace and attractively adorned with priceless armlets, ear-pendants and diadems. From their necks hung, between their four dark arms, the garland of wild flowers with drunken bees hovering around it. Their faces showed signs of agitation, with the eyebrows crooked in a frown, the nostrils distended, the eyes red (26-28).

The sages entered the gateway even as these were looking, and without asking their permission, just as they had entered the other gateways with doors of diamond adorned with gold. For, looking upon all the world with an equal eye, they went everywhere unhindered and untroubled by doubts. On seeing those four 'Kumāras', who had realized the truth of the Self, (but) were naked, and looked as if they were five years of age, though infinitely old, those two (gods), conducting themselves in a manner repugnant to the

¹ (alt.) 'Over whom Yama (the god of death) has no power'.

feelings of the exalted Lord, stopped with their canes those who did not deserve to be so treated, and laughed at them, deriding their puissance as presumption. When they were prevented from entering by the chiefs of the guard in the presence of the gods (who were looking on), the eyes of the sages, foremost as they were of those who merited reverence, suddenly became turbid with anger at the frustration of their eager desire to see the Lord, the First of Friends. And they spoke to them thus (26-31).

The sages said : 'How is it that you two alone, of all those who come here by exemplary service to the Lord and live here, displaying the same qualities, have a contrary disposition? And whom do you, judging others by your own crooked selves, suspect of evil designs against the Lord Who has renounced all strife and is ever at peace with Himself? How did you, who are got up like gods, come to attribute the fear that is based on the difference between bodies, to the Lord Who holds the universe in His bowels, though the wise see no difference between themselves and Him, but regard themselves as being contained in Him, the Paramātmā, as the space within a vessel is but a part of the unconfined outer space? We have a mind to do what would be really good for you, stupid retainers of the Supreme Lord, the Master of Vaikuntha. Because you entertain the sense of difference, you shall go hence to those sinful worlds where are to be found the three¹ foes of those who harbour such notions.' (32-34).

On hearing those terrible words, the retainers of Hari (Who was even more afraid of such sages than they), realized that it was a Brahmana's curse, which not all the weapons in the world could ward off; and they threw themselves down at their feet instantly and clasped them in abject terror. (They said :) 'You, blessed ones, have inflicted on us a punishment fitting the offence. So let it take effect and entirely wipe out our sin in slighting the gods. But vouchsafe us a jot of compassion, induced by regret, so that however low we might fall, we might not be swamped by the infatuation that might make us oblivious of the Lord' (35-36).

¹ Lust, anger and covetousness.

Being aware of the transgression of His retainers against the saintly, at the very moment it happened, the exalted Lord of the lotus navel, Who is dear to the noble-minded, went to that spot along with the Goddess Sṛī, moving on those feet that are the worthy object of quest of the great contemplatives who have renounced the world. His retainers hastened after Him with the things that He might need. The sages saw with their own eyes That (Brahma) Which may be known only in intense contemplation, as the ropes of pearl that depended from the moon-like umbrella sprayed Him with tiny drops of water, stirred by the cool breeze from the plying of the pair of fly-whisks graceful as swans. He, the Home of all ravishing traits, desirous of bestowing His grace on all, sent a thrill of delight into the hearts of those on whom rested His friendly glance. With the Goddess of Prosperity (in the form of the Sṛivatsa mark) shining on His dark and spacious breast, He seemed to light up His own abode, the crown and crest of the three worlds. On the yellow silk covering His sturdy hip shone a girdle, and He wore His garland of wild flowers over which the bees hummed. There were bracelets on His beautiful wrists. One hand rested on the shoulder of the son of Vinatā, while the other toyed with the lotus. Lovely was the face with its shapely nose and those cheeks which added beauty to the fish-shaped ear-pendants that eclipsed the lightning flash. He wore a bejewelled crown, and between His powerful arms lay a priceless pearl necklace ravishing the eyes, and from His neck hung the Kausthubha jewel (37-41).

On seeing that splendid figure, which He had taken for the benefit of Myself, of the Lord Bhava and of all of you (gods), a figure marvellously rich in beauty, which made His devotees think, 'Surely Indirā's (Lakshmi's) pride should suffer eclipse here!', the sages gazed and gazed as though they could never have enough of that lovely vision, and they bowed down their heads in a transport of joy. The wind that carried the fragrance of the honey of the holy basil, mixed with that of the filaments¹ of those lotuses, the feet of the Lord of the lotus eyes, entered through their nostrils

¹ A figurative reference to the toes.

and caused a tumult in their hearts and a thrill in their bodies, accustomed as they were to savouring the delights of the Brahma Everlasting. Looking up at the face that might be compared to the inner sheath of the blue lotus, and the smile, bright as the *kunda* bud, that hovered on the nether lip, which was of a lovely red, they gazed their fill; then they lowered their eyes to His feet, whereupon the nails shone like rubies; thus alternating between the face and the feet, they sought to fix that image in their minds by *yogic* concentration. And with all the fervour of their souls, they extolled Him Who showed them that body of the Purusha which is meet for contemplation by those of this world who seek the supreme goal of man through the various paths of yoga; which is most acceptable to the seers and a delight to the eye, as well as displaying the eight supernatural attributes which are inseparable from Him and which no one else possesses as of right or for ever (42-45).

The Kumāras said: 'Thou That art hidden from the wicked, though present in the hearts of all, hast this day shown Thyself before our eyes, because Thou didst occupy our minds from the moment Thou enteredst through the orifice of the ear, when our sire, Thy son, let us into the secret of Thyself. We recognise Thee as none other than the Supreme Reality, the Truth of the Self, bringing incessant and infinite joy to Thy devotees by granting them the vision of this glorious form compact of pure *sattva*; That Reality which the sages who have sundered the knot of egotism and discarded all attachments, as the result of the firm devotion they have cultivated by those means which they were vouchsafed by Thy Grace, apprehend in their hearts. Those who, knowing their true interest, have sought the sanctuary of Thy feet and delight in the surpassing sweetness of Thy tale, O Lord, Whose sanctifying fame is so pleasing and so worthy of celebration, do not reckon as of much account even *moksha* that may be had by Thy Grace, much less, such positions (however exalted) as dread the mere lifting of Thy eyebrow. If our transgressions¹ should result in our taking the meanest

¹ The suggestion (hinted at in ll. 38-42, p. 189) is that the sages already feel that they have been too severe and thus incurred sin.

of births, by all means let them, if only our minds rejoice in Thy feet as the bees do (in flowers), our words shine by virtue of their connection with them as the basil does, and our ears get filled with the tale of Thy virtues. Our eyes have feasted on this glorious figure that Thou hast deigned to reveal, O Lord of the measureless renown. To Thee That dost not show Thyself thus to those who have not subdued the senses, we offer our humble prostrations' (46-50).

CHAPTER XVI

HOW THE LORD MODIFIED THE CURSE

Brahmā said: When those sages who followed the path of yoga thus extolled Him, the all-pervading Lord Who makes His home in Vaikuntha, commended them and replied as follows. The Lord said: 'Since these attendants of Mine, Jaya and Vijaya, greatly offended against you, ignoring My feelings, and you, My devotees, have inflicted punishment on them, I endorse that punishment for treating divine beings with scant courtesy. And I beseech your pardon, for to Me the Brahmana is Deity Itself, and I take upon Myself the blame for the slight My attendants put upon you. The good name of the master, who has to bear the blame when his servant has committed an offence, is ruined by that censure, as the skin is by an unsightly affection. I, the Lord of Vaikuntha, by bathing in Whose nectar-like, immaculate glory, all men down to the eater of dog's flesh are purified instantly, should sever even My own arm, should it turn against you, to whom I owe My splendid and sanctifying fame. It¹ is the purifying dust of your lotus feet, which service to you has brought Me, that has cleansed Me of all impurities and endowed Me with virtues which make the Goddess Śrī refuse to be parted from Me, though I do not hanker after her company, while others undertake severe austerities in order to attract

¹ (alt.) 'It is because My devotion to you has invested the dust of My lotus feet with the power instantly to cleanse the world of all its sins and brought me all virtues, that Goddess Śrī refuses' etc.

but the most casual glance from her eye. I do not get out of the oblations in the fire made by the sacrificer half the satisfaction which I feel when the Brahmana, who is supremely content, dedicating to Me the fruits of his works, consumes the delicacies dripping with ghee, with an enjoyment which is renewed with every mouthful. Who will not patiently bear with those Brahmanas, the sacred dust of whose feet is received on My crown by Me, Who command the limitless and irresistible puissance of Yoga-Māyā, and the water offered in worship at Whose feet instantly purifies all the worlds as well as the Lord-of-the-moonycrest? Those who regard as in any way different from Me the worthy Brahmana and the cow, who are my other bodies, or those creatures which lack a protector, will, because their eyes are blinded by sin, be wrathfully torn to pieces by the beaks of vultures, who are as vicious in temper as serpents, and who are the minions of Yama, Whom I have appointed to dispense punishment. Those men win Me over completely, who accord all honour to Brahmanas—even if those Brahmanas should revile them—because they look upon them as being no different from Me, and with joyous hearts and nectar-sweet smiles praise them, even as I do, with the loving words which a son addresses to his father.¹ Therefore let those who, not caring to consider what I, their master, would think of it, offended against you, instantly undergo the due punishment for their transgression and then return to My presence. Do Me the favour of making the separation of My servitors from Me end quickly' (2-12).

Brahmā said: 'Hearing those lovely, luminous words of His, streaming forth like the Vedic *mantras* those sages, though bitten by the serpent-fangs of anger, felt as if they could never have enough of them. Listening with one-pointed attention, and considering with all care that noble utterance, whose words were few but profound and unfathomable, they could not quite make out what He intended to do. Then, realizing that He spoke with the supreme authority of one who was paramount over the worlds created by His

¹ (*alt.*) 'which a father uses to his son'.

Yoga-Māyā, the Brahmanas rejoiced. And they answered Him with folded hands, their bodies thrilling with pleasure, the hair standing on end. The sages said, 'O Lord our God, when Thou, the Supreme Controller of the universe, sayest, "You have done Me a favour", we do not know what to make of it ! Thou, O Lord, That art ever intent on the good of the Brahmanas, no doubt speakest of them as if they were Thy God ; but in truth it is Thou, O Lord, That art the Soul of the Brahmanas and the God of their worship, as well as of those who are worthy of the regard of the gods. The eternal Dharma originates from Thee ; and it is safeguarded by the bodies that Thou assumest. Thou art regarded (by the Sāstra) as the supreme and changeless reward of Dharma, to be jealously treasured in secret. How could others be spoken of as bestowing favours on Thee, when the yogis who have abjured the worldly life by Thy Grace, quickly pass beyond the reach of death (*samsāra*) ? Thou art constantly attended by the Goddess of Prosperity, the dust of whose feet is received on their heads by those that yearn for affluence, and who seems to compete with the leader of the swarm of bees whose place is on the fresh garland of basil that the fortunate lay at Thy feet. And yet, though she assiduously serves Thee with flawless devotion, Thou That art all eagerness for the company of Thy great devotees, art not too mindful of her ; how, then, couldst Thou, Abode of all the prized virtues, be purified by the dust of the footprints of the Brahmanas or by the Śrīvatsa mark, or receive them (as if they were embellishments) ? (13-21).

'O Lord, to Whom the six auspicious qualities are intrinsic, Thou That art Dharma sustainest, by those three parts of Dharma that are uniquely Thine, the world of the moving and the stationary for the sake of the Brahmanas and the gods, destroying their enemies *rajas* and *tamas*, by means of the body compact of *sattva* which Thou assumest, and which showers all blessings on us. If Thou, O Lord, didst not protect the great Brahmana class, which deserves to be protected by Thee and cherished with kind and gracious words and the according of all honour, the noble and

auspicious Vedic way of life, of which Thou art the Author, would forthwith perish. For the world will follow only the example that Thou, the supremely great, setest. Such destruction cannot but be repugnant to Thee, since as the Abode of all *sattva* Thou desirest to promote the welfare of the world of men and destroyest its enemies by (means of the kings and potentates who are) Thy powers. The reverence Thou showest to the Brahmanas, for this reason, diminishes in no way the Glory of the Protector of the universe, the sovereign Lord of the three worlds ; it is but Thy pastime. We shall, sincerely and without reservation, agree, O Supreme Lord, to any punishment that Thou shalt think fit to impose on these two, or any occupation that Thou shalt decide to assign to them. And, since we laid on them a curse which they, being innocent, did not deserve, be pleased to inflict on us such punishment as Thou deemest proper ' (22-25).

The Lord told them, 'These two shall, without delay, be born as Asuras. Their constant preoccupation with Me rising to the pitch of *yogic* concentration, aided by anger, they shall soon return to My presence. Know, O Brahmanas, that the curse laid upon them was really prompted by Me ' (26).

Brahmā said : Thereupon, the sages, having seen the Lord of Vaikuntha, a feast for the eye, and His abode, the self-luminous Vaikuntha, and circumambulated and prostrated themselves before Him, took leave of Him and went back extremely happy, extolling the magnificence of the Lord Vishnu. And the Lord told His retainers, 'Go now ; and don't you be afraid, for all shall be well with you. Though I could foil the Brahmanas' curse, I do not wish to do that ; for I approve of what they have done. This has happened as ordained long ago by Ramā, who was angered by your stopping her at the door as she was about to enter, when I was locked in *yogic* slumber. Having expiated within a very short time the insult to the Brahmanas, by the concentration of your minds on Me in anger, you shall be restored to My presence.' Having thus commanded His warders, the Lord re-entered His own abode, which was adorned with many stories and clothed with transcendent glory (27-32).

As for those great gods, their lustre was dimmed in the world of Hari itself by reason of the Brahmanas' curse, which there was no escaping, and their pride was gone from them. As they fell from the Abode of the Lord Vishnu, there rose a great cry of dismayed compassion from the occupants of the great mansions, my children. It is the very same chief attendants of Hari that have now entered the virility of Kaśyapa, so potent for evil, deposited in Diti's womb. It is by the powerful energy of those Asura twins that your lustre has been dimmed. It is the Lord Hari Himself that has decreed this now. The same primordial Lord Who causes the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, Whose Yoga-Māyā may not be withstood by even the master-yogis, and Who is the Controller of the three *guṇas*, will also look after our welfare. What then shall we gain by debating this matter endlessly ?' (33-37).

CHAPTER XVII

HIRANYĀKSHA ON THE RAMPAGE

Maitreya said : Having heard the explanation given by the Self-existent, the gods were freed from fear, and they returned to heaven. The faithful Diti, who had grave misgivings about the fate of her offspring because of what her husband had said, gave birth to twins when a full hundred years had gone by. In heaven, on earth and in the upper air were seen many evil portents at their birth, making men fear catastrophes from all sides. Many regions and the mountains therein were rocked, the quarters were ablaze, lightning shot through cloudless skies, fire-brands fell, and the comets that cause affliction appeared in the sky. The wind, like an army on the march, with columns of dust for banners, blew a terrific gale, whistling furiously, uprooting huge trees. When the sun and stars were blotted out by the serried ranks of marching clouds, and the lightning crashed with titanic laughter, the sky was engulfed in darkness, and one could not see where the luminaries were. The sea, with its mountainous billows and

churning hollows, wailed in pain; the streams, wells and pools were in a tumult, their lotus beds wilting. There were frequent haloes seen round the sun and the moon, eclipsed by the node. The roll of thunder was heard in the cloudless sky, and from mountain caverns came a rumbling noise like that of chariots. Right in the heart of villages, vixens vomited fire and wailed inauspiciously, while jackals howled, and owls hooted. Everywhere dogs, raising their heads, bayed musically or wailed dolorously. Asses, O Kshattā, madly rushed about in herds, striking at the ground with their sharp hooves and excitedly braying. And the birds, alarmed by the braying, flew out of their nests with frightened cries. In the cattle sheds and forests the beasts dropped dung and urine. From the udders of the frightened cows oozed blood, not milk; the clouds rained pus, the images of gods shed tears, trees fell when there was no wind blowing. Evil planets in a blaze overtook benefic planets and stars in transit, or being retrograde, were in conflict with them. Seeing those frightful portents, all people other than the sons of Brahmā, being ignorant of the real cause, were in a panic, thinking that the dissolution of the world was come (1-15).

Those two primordial Asuras grew up, huge as mountains, with bodies hard as flint, their native prowess swiftly revealing itself. Scraping the sky with the crest of their golden crowns, they seemed to fill the quarters with their bulk. With glittering armlets on their arms and splendid girdles on their waists, they outshone the sun, and the earth shook under their tread. The Patriarch (Kaśyapa) gave the twins names. He who first emerged from his own body came to be known as Hiranyakaśipu, while he whom Diti gave birth to first was known as Hiranyāksha. Incontinent in the pride of his strong arm, and with no death to fear, because of the boon of Brahmā, Hiranyakaśipu brought the three worlds and their Guardians under his sway. Hiranyāksha was his younger brother, and dear to him; and he was zealous to please him. Ever eager for the fray, he, armed with the mace, went to the celestial world one day, seeking a fight (16-20).

On seeing him, who was irresistible in the impetuo-

sity of his onset and who, with his gold anklets tinkling, the garland Vaijayanti adorning his neck, and the great mace resting on his shoulder, was utterly fearless and arrogant, unbridled in the consciousness of his valour, strength, and the boon he enjoyed, the gods were terrified, and hid themselves like serpents dreading Garuda. Not seeing Indra or the gods anywhere, the King of the Asuras realized that they had hid themselves, driven to distraction by his puissance, and he let off a thunderous peal of laughter. Returning thence, the mighty creature plunged for sport, like an elephant in rut, into the ocean of unplumbed depth with its thunderous roar. When he entered the water, terror seized Varuṇa's horde of amphibious monsters; though they were not attacked by him, they were so intimidated by his power that their hearts sank and they fled precipitately a long, long way. Wandering in the sea for hundreds of years, he of the immense strength threshed the huge billows raised by his own breathing, again and again with his mace, securely bound with hempen strands; and then he came to Vibhāvārī, the city of Prachetas (Varuṇa), my son. Meeting there Prachetas, ruler of the world of Asuras, and the master of the monsters of the deep, he with a mocking laugh made him his reverence, as if he were the lowest of the low, and told him, 'O first of kings, be pleased to give me battle. You are the Ruler and Guardian of the worlds, of immense renown, and you vanquish the strength of infatuated men who flatter themselves on their valour. Long ago, my lord, you vanquished all Dānavas and Daityas, and offered the Rājasūya sacrifice' (21-28).

Thus outrageously mocked by the enemy in his overweening arrogance, the blessed Lord that rules the waters was angered; but he shrewdly kept his temper, and told him, 'We have renounced all strife, my boy. I can think of none other than the primordial Lord, O Chief of the Asuras, who can give you satisfaction on the battlefield, expert as you are in the art of war. Go to Him, Whom men of courage like you speak highly of. Meeting Him, the valiant Lord, soon, you will, all your pride vanquished, lie on the battlefield, surrounded by dogs. It is for giving the quietus to wicked creatures

like you, in the interest of the well-being of the good, that He takes to Himself many bodies' (29-31).

CHAPTER XVIII

HIRANYĀKSHA FIGHTS THE BOAR

Maitreya said: The intrepid Asura disregarded that warning of the Lord of the waters in his evil pride; and knowing from Nārada where Hari was to be found, he entered Rasātala with all expedition, my dear. There he beheld the all-conquering Lord, mountainous in size, raising up the earth on the tip of His tusk, and putting out Hiraṇyāksha's lustre with the scarlet splendour of His eyes. And he (the Asura) laughed aloud, shouting, 'Aha! a beast of the jungle here!' And he called out to Him, saying, 'Come along, you dunce, put down the earth, it was given to us, the dwellers in Rasātala, by the creators of the universe. You will not get away with it, when my eyes are on you, you vile wretch of a celestial, who have taken the form of a pig. Were you pampered by our rivals, so that you might destroy us? For you slay Asuras, employing craft and fighting under cover. But I shall kill you, fool, who rely mainly upon your skill in deceiving the world, and thus wipe out the grief of my people. When you are slain, your head smashed by the mace hurled by my arm, the sages, the gods, and all others who bring you tribute, will have their roots severed, and perish (of their own inanition)' (1-5).

Though thus pricked, as by a lance, by the abuse of the foe, the Lord put up with it, seeing that the earth, which was lodged on the tip of His tusk, was frightened, and rose to the surface of the water, as an elephant, accompanied by its mate, might do, attacked by a crocodile. Pursuing Him like the crocodile, as He was getting out of the water, he of the tawny hair and prominent teeth taunted Him in a voice booming like thunder, saying, 'What is there that can be too despicable for them who are lost to all sense of shame!' (6-7).

Placing the earth in a suitable place above the water, the Lord imparted to her His own power to support

all things. And, then, as He was being extolled by the Creator and showered with flowers by the gods, while the enemy was looking, He spoke with a laugh, though boiling with rage inside Him, to the Asura, who, adorned with gold jewellery, clad in a splendid coat of mail made of gold, and carrying his great mace, followed close behind, hurling at Him vile abuse that could lacerate the heart (8-9).

The exalted Lord said : ' It is true that we are beasts of the jungle ; we are looking out for village curs like you. Heroic fighters disregard your boastful ravings, you luckless creature who have the noose of death round your neck. We have walked off, it seems, with what was given as a trust to the inhabitants of Rasātala ! Put to flight by you with your mace, we, lost to all sense of shame, still linger here on the battle-field willy-nilly ; having incurred the enmity of the strong, where could we go ? Are you not the Lord of the captains of the hosts that fight on foot ? Come, compass our defeat swiftly, instead of debating endlessly ; slaying us, wipe off the tears of your people. He who does not make good his word cannot hold up his head before decent folk ' (10-12).

Maitreya said : Thus taunted by the Lord and savagely mocked, he was incensed like a great serpent that is teased. Breathing heavily in his wrath, all his faculties in a tumult, the Daitya rushed upon Hari aiming a blow at Him with his mace. The Lord, stepping aside, dodged the blow directed against His breast, as the perfected yogi places himself beyond the reach of death. When he again began whirling his mace, biting his lips in anger, Hari rushed at him in a great wrath, to strike him with His mace on the left eyebrow ; but he, being an expert fighter with the mace, struck it down with his own before it could reach him, my friend. In this wise Hiranyāksha and Hari went on vehemently attacking each other with their heavy maces, each resolved to win. The fight between those rivals intent on victory, circling round in many a varied movement, their bodies thwacked by the cruel mace, and their gorge rising as they smelt the blood from their wounds, reminded one of two bulls fighting for a cow. To see this fight for the sake of the earth, the cause of

their enmity, between the Daitya and the Almighty Lord Whose limbs were constituted of the sacrifice, and Who had taken a boar's body by His power of Māyā, Brahmā (the self-luminous), came there attended by the sages. Seeing the Asura, who was full of self-confidence and had shed all fear, who gave blow for blow and seemed irresistible in his valour, the blessed Lord, the leader of the myriad sages, addressed himself to Narayana, the Primordial Boar (13-21).

Brahmā said: 'This (Asura), O Lord, having obtained a boon from us, has been inflicting grievous injury on all who seek the shelter of Thy feet, the gods, the Brahmanas, the progeny of Surabhi (the cows), and other harmless creatures, unjustly imputing blame to them and terrorizing them. He is a thorn in the side of the world, ever on the rampage, seeking some one who would stand up to him in a fight, but finding none. Therefore, O Lord, do not play with him as a child might play with a vicious snake that has raised its head; for this wicked fellow is crafty as well as arrogant, and acknowledges no restraint. Destroy this sinner, O Lord, Thou Unfailing Support, using Thy puissance, before the time favourable to him comes, when he might wax in strength resorting to his Māyā. The dread hour of sunset, which would be favourable to the destruction of the world, approaches, O Lord; ensure the victory of the gods, O Thou That art the Soul of all. The auspicious interval *abhijit* is well nigh spent; be pleased to despatch quickly this formidable foe, for the sake of the welfare of us, Thine own. Luckily he himself has sought Thee out, his appointed death. Slay him in battle, using Thy overwhelming strength, and establish the worlds in safety and security' (22-28).

CHAPTER XIX

THE SLAYING OF HIRANYĀKSHA

Maitreya said: Giving due consideration to Brahmā's earnest and pleasing words, the Lord with an amused smile¹ signified His agreement by a loving sidelong glance.

¹ At Brahmā's anxious concern about the lucky hour!

Raising Himself up, He who had emerged from a member (the nose) of Brahmā's body struck with His mace, on the lower jaw, the enemy who was moving unafraid before His eyes. Struck down by the mace wielded by him (the Asura), the Lord's mace slipped from His hand, to the wonder of everybody; it rolled down on the ground, and shone where it lay. But though this gave him his opportunity, he did not attack Him. While thus respecting the laws of war, he nettled the leader of the heavenly host. When the fall of the mace brought forth shouts of dismay, the all-powerful Lord respected him for observing the law, and summoned His discus Sunābha with a thought. As He, with his discus eager for a fight, was engaged at close quarters with the villainous son of Diti, His (whilom) personal attendant, the sojourners in the upper air, who did not know His might, were heard from all sides exclaiming variously, 'May all be well with you!', 'Kill him, please, do!' (1-6).

Terribly annoyed at seeing Him with the eyes like lotus petals, standing before him four-square, armed with the discus, the Asura bit his lip in wrath, breathing heavily. Eyeing Him as if he would burn Him with a look, he of the fierce tusks sprang at Hari and struck Him with his own mace, crying, 'Dead you are!' The exalted Lord, the Boar that was sacrifice embodied, playfully struck down with His left paw, even as the foe was looking, that missile which came with the speed of the wind, my friend. And He told him, 'Pick up your weapon, put forth your best effort, since you wish to win.' Thus told, he again hurled it at Him with a mighty shout. Seeing the mace coming towards Him, the Lord stood His ground and caught it when it neared Him as playfully as Garuda grabs the serpent. His prowess balked, his self-esteem gone, his lustre tarnished, the great Asura would not take back the mace proffered by Hari. He snatched a trident, which looked like a blazing fire with its darting tongues, to throw it at Hari, the Lord of the Sacrifice thus disguised, like one who sought to employ black magic against a Brahmana. With the sharp-edged discus Hari cut down that trident—even as Indra had cut the feather which Garuda

had voided—as it blazed in mid sky with overpowering splendour, hurled with all his strength by the great warrior of the Asuras (7-14).

When his trident was cut to pieces by Hari's discus, the Asura came swiftly towards Him, and in mounting wrath, smote Him with his iron fist on the spacious chest, the Home of the Goddess of plenty, letting off a thunderous shout, and straightway vanished. Struck by him thus, the exalted Lord, the Primordial Boar, showed not even a tremor in any part of the body, O Kshattā, any more than an elephant struck with a garland might. Then he (the Asura) employed many a magic trick against Hari, Lord of Yoga-Māyā : seeing which all men were in terror, thinking that the end of the world was come. Raging winds were let loose, plunging the world in darkness by raising a pall of dust. From all directions came showers of stones as if discharged from slings. The starry firmament was blotted out by massed clouds accompanied by thunder and lightning, which rained down without a break showers of pus, hair, blood, excreta, urine and bones. Mountains discharged volleys of every kind of missile, O flawless one, and naked Rākshasis with dishevelled hair were seen, armed with spears. Strident and bloodthirsty shouts and oaths raised by multitudes of Yakshas and Rākshasas and by infantry, cavalry, chariot and elephant forces assailed the ear. The exalted Lord, Who has for feet the three sacrificial 'savanas', despatched His beloved weapon, the Sudarśana, to destroy the magic phantoms which the Asura had called up. At that moment Diti felt a tremor in her heart, suddenly remembering her husband's decree, and blood flowed from her breasts. When his magic tricks had failed, he again pounced upon Keśava in a rage, and threw his arms about Him to crush Him, but found Him outside them. As he pounded Him with his adamantine fists, Adhokshaja despatched him with a blow behind the ear, as the Lord of the gods had slain the son of Tvashtā. Struck contemptuously by the all-conquering Lord, he spun round and round and fell, his eyes popping out, his arms, feet and hair flung wildly about him, like a great tree uprooted by the wind (15-26).

Looking at him as he lay on the ground, his lustre undimmed, his fierce tusks plunged into his nether lip, Aja and others who had come there praised him, saying, 'Ah, who else could hope for such a death ! To this foremost of the Asuras it was given to die struck down by the foe, and looking at the face of Him on Whom the yogis meditate in the depths of the heart in the state of *samādhi*, to be freed from the phantom phenomenon of the subtle body. These are none but those two personal attendants of His, who were plunged into that evil state by the curse, and they will be regaining their old status after one or two more births in this world' (27-29).

The gods then praised the Lord. They said, 'We make our salutations again and again to Thee That art the Source of all sacrifices, That assumest a form of pure *sattva* (as Vishnu) to sustain the world. By our great good fortune, he who harrowed the world has been slain, and we have found peace and contentment by devotion to Thy feet' (30).

Maitreya said: 'Having thus despatched Hiranyāksha of the irresistible valour, Hari, the Primordial Boar, extolled by the Lord whose seat is the lotus, and others, returned to His own world where the days are one long festival. And now I have told you, good friend, as I heard it from my teacher, the tale of the exploit of Hari in this incarnation, how He slew Hiranyāksha of the immense prowess in the great battle, as if he were no more than a plaything' (31-32).

The Sūta said: Hearing the tale of the Lord recounted by the sage Kaushārava, Kshattā, the great devotee, was in bliss, O Brahman. When one can find great joy in hearing the tales of the saintly, whose fame is sanctifying and has spread all over the world, how much more should one rejoice, hearing of the deeds of Him Who bears the Srīvatsa mark ? He Who swiftly rescued from deadly peril the lordly tusker which, finding itself in the grip of the crocodile, gave itself up to the contemplation of His lotus feet, while the cow elephants trumpeted in their agony ; He, the Lord Who is easily propitiated by sincere men who look upon Him as their sole refuge, though it is impossible for the

wicked to please Him—who that has a sense of gratitude will not devote himself to His worship? He who listens to this wonderful tale of the way of the Lord, who purposefully took the form of a boar, and diverted Himself by slaying Hiraṇyāksha, will be easily freed even from the sin of Brahmana-murder, O Brahmanas. To those who hear this story, my good sir, it will bring great fruits—religious merit, sanctity, wealth, fame and long life, and the fulfilment of all their wishes, as well as strength and vigour. It will give them prowess in battle and take them in the end to Narayana, the Goal (33-38).

CHAPTER XX

BRAHMĀ'S EXTRAORDINARY CREATIONS

Saunaka asked: 'O son of the Sūta, what outlet did Manu, the son of Svayambhū, who had obtained the earth for his realm, provide for the emergence of the creation that was still in the womb of time? And Kshattā, the great devotee and bosom friend of Krishna, who gave his exclusive devotion to Him, and abandoned his elder brother and his sons because of their sinning against Him; who, born of the loins of Dvaipāyana, was in no way inferior to him in greatness; who placed himself unreservedly in the hands of Krishna and followed those who were devoted to Him—what questions did he ask of Maitreya, foremost of the knowers of truth, when he arrived at Kuśāvarta (Haridwar), after his pilgrimage to sacred places, and found Maitreya settled there? Without a doubt they discoursed on many an edifying topic bearing on the glory of Hari's lotus feet, and capable of dispelling sins even as the waters of the Gangā do. Tell us—and may all good be with you—those tales of Hari Whose mighty deeds should be proclaimed. What man of taste can feel satiety, quaffing the nectar of Hari's pastimes?' (1-6).

Thus questioned by the sages who lived in Naimiśa, Ugraśravas, with his mind given wholly to the Lord, said, 'Listen, I will tell you. Having heard how Hari, Who had taken the body of a boar by His own power of

Māyā, had playfully lifted up the earth from the nether regions and contemptuously despatched Hiranyāksha, the scion of the Bharatas was overjoyed, and he further questioned the sage. Vidura asked: 'After having created the Patriarchs, for the propagation of the world of creatures, what work did their lord and master (Brahmā) apply himself to? Be pleased to tell me, for you know what is hidden from others. How did the Brahmanas, Marichi and the rest, and Manu, the son of Svayambhū, set about peopling the earth by the command of Brahmā? Did they create the world of beings by uniting with their wives, or independently, or did they all join together and make them?' (7-11).

Maitreya said: From the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* of Pradhāna by the will of the exalted Lord, through the operation, inscrutable in its working, of the past *karmas* of *jīvas*, the activity of the Purusha, who controls Prakṛti, and the agency of time, the Mahat came into existence. From Mahat, when it was predominantly *rājasic*, issued, by the will of the Lord, the ego with its divisions marked by the three different *guṇas*, and it produced the series of quintets¹, *ākāśa* and the rest. Finding that each of them was unable by itself to create the physical world, they combined, aided by the power of the Lord, and produced the shining cosmic egg. That egg lay lifeless on the waters of the ocean for more than a thousand years; then the Supreme Lord entered and dwelt in it. From His navel issued the lotus blazing like a thousand suns, which housed all creatures, and in which the Lord who is self-governed (Brahmā) appeared. And, inspired by the exalted Lord Who lay on the waters, he established the world-order as before (giving to each created thing its name and form) in accordance with his own plan (12-17).

By reason of ignorance, he first created nescience with its five divisions—Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra, Tamas, Moha, and Mahātamas (or Mahāmoha). Not being pleased with that body of his, because it abounded in Tamas, he abandoned it. The Yakshas and the

¹ The subtle elements, the organs of sense, the organs of action and the gross elements.

Rākshasas appropriated to themselves that body from which hunger and thirst originated. Overwhelmed by hunger and thirst, they rushed upon him to devour him, some calling out, 'Do not protect him, we are famished,' others crying, 'Eat him up.' The god (Brahmā) then pleaded with them in great fear, 'Do not eat me up; protect me. For you, Yakshas and Rākshasas, are my children'. Then, taking a brilliant form he created the principal divinities, who were *sāttvic* by nature. And they took to themselves for play that brilliant form, which he discarded, and which was the day. From the part of the body below the waist, the god (Brahmā) created the exceedingly libidinous Asuras; spurred by lust, they sought him out, intent on coition. The exalted Lord laughed, but when the shameless creatures pursued him, he became angry; and then, taking fright fled precipitately. Approaching Hari, the Bestower of Boons, Who destroys the sufferings of those who put themselves in His hands, and Who takes that form which appeals to His devotees in order to shed His blessings on them, he prayed, 'Save Me, O Paramount Lord! It was by Thy command that I created all beings. These wicked creatures pursue me with intent to seduce me. Art Thou not the sole Saviour of the distressed, even as Thou art the sole Cause of the suffering of those who do not seek Thy feet?' (18-27).

He, Who could see clearly into the hearts of others, realized his acute misery and told him, 'Give up this horrid body of yours,' and he did so. That body, which was the evening twilight, looked and behaved like a woman—her lotus feet tinkling with the sound of anklet bells, her eyes in a whirl of intoxication, her hip swathed in fine linen held by a zone, her breasts standing erect, crushing against each other. Seeing her with the shapely nose and the beautiful teeth, the charmingly playful, smiling glances, and array of massed black curls, coyly covering herself (with the end of her garment), the Asuras fell into a stupor of admiration, O Dharma. They exclaimed, 'Ah! what marvellous beauty, what boldness, how charming in her youthfulness! She moves about in the midst of those who

passionately yearn for her as if she knew no passion !' Thus speculating endlessly about the evening twilight in the guise of a woman, the fools respectfully greeted her, and questioned her thus in their infatuation ; ' Who may you be, O you with thighs like plantain stalks ? Whose daughter are you ? What brings you here, my imperious dear ? You harrow our hearts by dangling before us, unfortunates, this beauty beyond price ! Whoever you may be, my fair, we are supremely lucky to have fallen in with you. But, as you play ball, you pound the hearts of those who look at you. Your lotus feet do not stay still for a moment, O you that are worthy of all praise, as you hit the dancing ball with your palm. Your waist wilts, frightened by the weight of your big breasts. Your innocent-seeming glance flits lazily ; your head of hair is, oh, so lovely ! ' The stupid Asuras, taken in by the evening twilight, which masqueraded as a woman and tempted them, took her to themselves (28-37).

With a beautiful body that laughed in its proud consciousness of itself and seemed to savour its own loveliness, the exalted Lord Brahmā created the bands of the Gandharvas and Apsarases. And then he relinquished that lovely and beloved body of his, which was in the form of the moonlight, and the Gandharvas, with Viśvāvasu at their head, gladly appropriated it. Having created from his sloth the spirits and ghouls, he shut his eyes on seeing their naked bodies and dishevelled hair. They took to themselves that body of the Lord on his relinquishing it, a body which was called yawning. That which makes the senses inert and unconscious is called sleep ; and those who, as the result of the derangement of their faculties, defile themselves, are made mad by the evil spirits that are described as lunacy. The all-powerful Lord, the Self-existent, possessed of the consciousness of his own strength, took an invisible form and created the companies of the Sādhyas, and the manes. The manes took to themselves that body, which was the cause of their coming into existence. It is by virtue of their possession of that body that the manes and the Sādhyas receive offerings made by men who are well-versed in the

performance of the rites for their propitiation. He created the Siddhas and the Vidyādhara by his power of vanishing from view at will; and to them he gave away that marvellous body of his known as *antardhāna*. Looking at his own reflection and thinking highly of his own beauty, the all-powerful One created the Kinnaras and the Kimpurushas out of that image. And they appropriated to themselves that shadow body which their Creator discarded. And the Kinnaras and Kimpurushas sing along with their spouses his exploits at break of day. Care-laden because his creation did not prosper and multiply, he lay down stretching himself to his full length, and in a pique gave up that body. From the hair that fell away from that body were born the snakes, my dear, and from its moving on its hands and knees were born the serpents; and because they were born of that thick body stretched at full length, the cobras and such swift-moving snakes have thick necks and broad hoods; and they are all cruel (38-48).

When towards the close of his work of creation the Self-existent came to look upon himself as having found fulfilment, he created, out of his mind, the 'Manus' who protected the world of men. To them, he, the support of all creatures, gave that body of his, which became the prototype of the human body. And on seeing the Manus, those who had been created before them praised the Creator, saying, 'Excellent is this handiwork of Thine, O Creator of the worlds, since in this creation (of men) all Vedic rites are securely established, and we shall all feed on offerings made to us.' Controlling his senses by means of the practice of austerities, intense devotion, and deep meditation, accompanied by proper postures and other ancillary disciplines, Brahmā created the *rshis*, the progeny that was most to his liking. To each of them the Unborn gave a fraction of that body of his which contained meditation, yoga, supernatural power, austerities, adoration and non-attachment (49-51).

CHAPTER XXI

THE LORD'S PROMISE TO KARDAMA

Vidura prayed, 'Please tell us now the story of the line of Svāyambhuva Manu, supremely esteemed by all, that line in which intercourse between the sexes was the means of multiplying progeny. Also tell us how Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, the sons of Svāyambhuva Manu, protected Dharma and the earth with its seven island-continents. You spoke, O Brahman, flawless one, of his daughter, Devahūti, as the wife of the patriarch Kardama. How many children did he, the great yogi, beget on her, who was accomplished in all the yogic disciplines; tell me, I am all attention. And how did the blessed Ruchi, and Daksha, Brahmā's son, marrying the daughters (Ākūti and Prasūti) of Manu, propagate progeny, O Brahman?' (1-5).

Maitreya said: Bidden by Brahmā to beget children, the blessed Kardama practised austerities on the bank of the Sarasvati for ten thousand years. In the course of those austerities, Kardama waited upon Hari, Granter of boons to those who seek His protection, practising the prescribed modes of worship with devotion and deep meditation. When he had practised *tapas* for such a long time in the Kṛta-yuga, the Lord of the lotus eyes was so greatly pleased with him, O Kshattā, that He appeared to him with that form of His which is of the essence of the Supreme Brahmā, and which may be known only through the Veda. He saw Him stationed in the sky, with His lotus feet on the shoulders of Garuda, immaculate in His purity and bright as the sun, wearing a garland of white lotus and blue water lily; with a mass of glossy black curls framing the lotus face; clad in spotless raiment, adorned with crown and ear-pendants, and holding in His hands the conch-shell, the discus and the mace, and playfully twirling a white lily, while His smiling look went straight to the heart. On His breast was the Srīvatsa mark, and from His neck hung the Kausthubha jewel. On seeing Him, he threw himself down on the ground in a transport of joy, his dream come true. And with folded hands, he whose

mind was naturally predisposed to love God sang a paeon of praise (6-12).

The sage (Kardama) said: 'O joy that I should have reaped this day, O Lord That art worthy of all praise, the full fruit of possessing eyes by beholding Thee, the treasure-house of all good—a sight which the yogis, who have over many lives been perfected in yoga, wistfully long for. Thou, O Lord, grantest all that they pray for to those who, because their intelligence is eclipsed by Thy Māyā, worship Thy lotus feet, which might be a boat to cross the ocean of birth and death, for such trivial pleasures as may be found even in hell. I myself, wishing to marry a wife of a similar disposition, who could bring one all that one could wish for as a householder, have thrown myself at the feet of Him, Who is the wishing-tree and the sole source of all that is good, impelled by this ignoble desire. O Lord That art supremely great, the world of men, plagued by desires, is bound as with a rope by the ordainments that Thou, their paramount Ruler, hast proclaimed. I too, walk in the ways of the world, O Lord That art pure Dharma incarnate. And so, to Thee That standest forth as time, I would pay tribute (by discharging the ordained duties). But there are those who, repudiating the world, and the men who (like me) follow it sheep-like, betake themselves to the shelter of the umbrella that is Thy feet, and feed each other with that heady wine, sweet as nectar, the praise of Thy glorious qualities, which extinguishes the cravings of the flesh. The lives of such men are not cut off by the swift-revolving wheel of time, which has the Brahmā for axle, thirteen spokes, three hundred and sixty joints, six fellies and numberless serrated edges, and a nave with three sections, and which, as it revolves, destroys the world. While Thou art the One without a second, O Lord, Thou dost, from the desire to create the worlds, use the powers (*sattva* and the rest), sprung from Yoga-Māyā, Thy creature, obedient to Thy will, whom Thou hast invoked in Thyself, and thus dost create the universe and preserve it, and in due course retract it within Thyself, like the spider. Though Thou, O Supreme Lord, dost not much relish bestowing on us

the pleasures of the senses by employing Thy power of Māyā, may we not hope that that (gift itself) will culminate in our attaining the supreme good (*moksha*), since Thou hast vouchsafed us this vision of Thy Māyic (finite) form adorned with the shining basil? I make my prostrations again and again to Thee That hast no use for the fruits of activity, being absorbed in Thine own bliss, and yet keepest the world process going by means of Thy Māyā ; to Thee Whose lotus feet are meet for the homage of all the worlds, and Who showerest all desired blessings on even the lowliest' (13-21).

The sage (Maitreya) said : Thus praised by him in all sincerity, the Lord of the lotus navel, Who shone over the wings of Suparṇa, addressed these nectar-sweet words to him, as His eyes with their loving glance and the smile that showed itself in the play of the eyebrows rested on him (22).

The Lord said : ' Knowing your deeply cherished wish, I long ago arranged for the fulfilment of the object with which you worshipped Me, disciplining yourself by self-control. Never shall worship offered Me by those whose minds are anchored in Me go in vain, O Patriarch, much less when it is offered by those like you. The emperor Manu, the son of the Great Progenitor, who is celebrated for his devotion to the good life, rules from Brahmāvarta the earth with its seven seas. That royal sage, who is well versed in Dharma, will come here to see you the day after tomorrow, O Brahman, with his queen Satarūpā. O worthy one, he will give away in marriage, to you, her peer, his daughter with the brilliantly dark eyes, who is upright and virtuous, and who, having attained marriageable age, wishes to wed. She is just the kind of wife on whom you have set your heart these many years. She, a princess, will soon wait upon you and do her best to please you. She will bear you nine daughters, on whom the sages will beget sons in every way worthy of them. And you, having faithfully discharged the duty I have laid on you, and won absolute purity, and dedicated to Me the fruits of your works, shall attain Me. Having shown compassion to all creatures¹ and made them feel

¹ As a householder.

the cow-tailed monkey and the lion, the ape, the ichneumon and the musk-deer were found there (33-44).

Reaching that extremely sacred place accompanied by his retainers,¹ the first King saw the sage seated there after having done the fire rites. He glowed with splendour; his body, though subjected to severe discipline in the prolonged practice of austerities, was not unduly emaciated, since the loving glance of the Lord had rested on it, and he had drunk in the words of the Lord that were like nectar from the moon. He was tall, with eyes like lotus petals. He wore matted locks and was clad in tree-bark. On a closer view his body, unkempt and covered with dirt, looked like an unpolished gem (45-48).

Welcoming the King, who had come to his hut and prostrated himself before him, he accorded him appropriate hospitality. When he, accepting his courtesies, had deferentially taken his seat, the sage, who remembered what the Lord had told him, addressed him, delighting him with his engaging words. 'Your royal progress, my lord, is without a doubt for the protection of the good and the punishment of the wicked, since in you is Hari's power of protection. I offer my salutations to you, the immaculate Vishnu,² Who takes, as occasion demands, the appropriate form as the sun, moon, fire, Indra, Vāyu, Yama, Dharma and Prachetas. If you stopped going over the earth like the sun, seated in your triumphal chariot studded with gems, whose mere presence puts fear into the wicked, and twanging your formidable bow and taking with you a great army, making the earth, scored by its trail, tremble under its tread, that very moment the norms of Dharma based on *varṇa* and *āśrama*, established by the exalted Lord, would be destroyed by marauders, O King, and that would be a great misfortune indeed. If you should relax your vigilance, unrighteousness would raise its head, thanks to the greedy men who know no restraint, and the world, overrun by depredators, would be ruined. But, still, I would like to know the object of

¹ (v.r.) 'by his daughter' or 'by his wife'. ² The righteous King is endowed with the puissance of Vishnu, the Protector of the worlds.

assured that they have nought to fear from you,¹ you, with your senses under control, shall see yourself and the world as identical with Me and Me with yourself. I shall be born with a fraction of Myself, of Devahūti, your wife, who will have received your seed. And I shall give to the world the Sāstra that explains the (Sāṅkhya) categories' (23-32).

Having thus assured him, the Lord Who appears to those whose senses are turned inward, departed from the Bindusaras encircled by the Sarasvati. As he was gazing on Him with loving eyes, the Lord Who is ever sought by the Siddhas went His way, extolled by their chiefs, and listening to the Vedic hymns, and the *sāman* chants based on them, as they were spelt out by the wings of (Garuda) the king of the birds. When the Immaculate Lord had left, the blessed sage Kardama stayed on in his hermitage on the bank of the Bindusaras, awaiting the appointed day. Manu, who was travelling over the earth with his wife and daughter, riding in his chariot with gold fittings, arrived on the day the Lord had foretold, at that hermitage of the sage, who had discharged his vows, O splendid bowman. In that place, surrounded by the Sarasvati, where had fallen tears from the eyes of the Lord, as they lingered with intense love on him (Kardama), who had made his whole-hearted submission to Him, was the lake 'Bindusaras', with its sacred waters, wholesome and sweet as nectar. It was frequented by bands of Maharshis. It had groves of holy trees and vines, with sacred birds and beasts calling. It abounded in the flowers and fruits of all seasons and was gracious with the opulence of its woodlands. It resounded with the glad cries of flocks of birds and was bright with the flitting of drunken bees. The peacocks in their intoxication strutted about like dancers, and the koels called deliriously to each other. It was adorned with *kadamba*, *champaka*, *aśoka*, *karanja*, *bakula* and *asana*, *kunda*, *mandāra* and *kutaja*, and the tender saplings of the mango. It was filled with the melodious notes of *kārandava* and *plava*, of swan and osprey, moorhen and *sāras*-crane, *chakravāka* and *chakora*. Deer and hog, porcupine, *gayal* and elephant,

¹ As a *sannyāsin*.

your coming here, O valiant one. I shall do with all my heart whatever you want of me' (49-56).

CHAPTER XXII

KARDAMA MARRIES DEVAHŪTI

Maitreya said : When the sage, who was averse to the worldly life, had ceased speaking, the emperor, who seemed to receive with shrinking modesty the praise of his great qualities and splendid deeds, answered him thus. Manu said : ' From the desire to protect and propagate the Veda, of which he is the embodiment, Brahmā created from his mouth you who are devoted to austerities, knowledge and yoga and are free from addiction to the life of pleasure. And He of the thousand feet created us from His thousand arms for the protection of the Brahmana. Therefore the Brahmana is spoken of as His heart and the Kshatriya as His limb. While the Brahmana and the Kshatriya sustain and uphold each other, the Lord, Who is cause and effect and yet immutable, looks after them both. All my doubts have been cleared as a result of my meeting you, revered sir, since you have been kind enough to expound of your own accord the duty of those who would protect the world. By supreme good luck I have been able to look upon you, on whom men who have not learnt self-control could hardly hope to set eyes, and touched with my head the sanctifying dust of your feet. I am blest to be thus favoured with your advice and drink in with my receptive ears your heart-warming words (1-7).

' Be pleased, revered sage, to pay heed out of your kindness to my humble petition, prompted by my anxious love for my daughter. This daughter of mine, the sister of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, seeks a spouse possessed of youth, character and other noble traits. Ever since she heard Nārada speak of your character, learning, good looks, youth and other admirable virtues, she has given her heart to you. Therefore, O best of Brahmanas, be pleased to accept her whom I offer to you with all earnestness, and who is in every way fitted to be your helpmeet in discharging the duties of the

householder. The rejection of what is desirable, when it comes without effort, is not to be commended even in one who has cultivated inner detachment ; much less in one who entertains desires. Even the man of renown, if he rejects what he desires when it comes unsought, and then solicits the niggardly, will find that his fame has been damaged, and being thus scorned, his self-respect suffers. I heard, O wise one, that you were planning to marry. Since you are thinking of putting a term to your celibacy,¹ be pleased to accept her whom I would respectfully bestow upon you' (8-14).

The sage replied, ' Very good ; I wish to marry, and your daughter has not been promised to anyone. This first (and best) mode of marriage is in every way suited to us. This marriage that your daughter desires, O King, being well known and approved by the Vedic rule, shall take place. And who would not be eager to win your daughter, whose beauty eclipses the lustre of her ornaments ? When she played ball on the top of the terrace of her mansion, a vision of loveliness, with her tinkling feet, and her eyes flitting as they followed the ball, Viśvāvasu, happening to look at her from his aerial car, fell down, his heart overwhelmed by his infatuation. When she, the ornament of her sex, on whom those who have not worshipped the feet of the Goddess of prosperity may not even set eyes ; when this beloved daughter of Manu and sister of Uttānapāda, seeks one out and asks to be accepted, what man of sense would refuse her ? Therefore I am willing to be joined in wedlock with the gentle fair, it being understood that I shall live with her until such time as she carries my seed in her womb. Thereafter I would deem it obligatory to give myself up to the practice of those *dharma*s proclaimed by Vishnu, which are the most important for those who have renounced and which totally eschew violence. For this I find warrant in the word of the infinite Lord Who is paramount over the Patriarchs, and from Whom arose this manifold universe, in Whom it will merge, and by Whom it is sustained' (15-20).

¹ Kardama was vowed not to lifelong celibacy but only to celibacy which might be ended by marriage.

Maitreya went on : Having said this, O warrior of the formidable bow, he was silent, his mind absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord of the lotus navel, while his face, beautiful with its smile, ravished the heart of Devahūti (21).

He (Manu), making sure of what his queen and his daughter wished, gladly bestowed on him, who was rich in the possession of virtues, his daughter who was in every way worthy of him. The empress Satarūpā, rejoicing, gave the couple exceedingly valuable presents as dowry, consisting of jewellery, raiment and household goods. The emperor, who had shed his cares, having given away his daughter to one who was her equal, embraced her. His heart wrung by his yearning love, he shed many tears, unable to bear the thought of parting from her, wetting his daughter's tresses as he cried, ' Ah ! little mother, my child ! ' (22-25).

Taking leave of the great sage, the King left for his own City with his wife and retinue. Riding in his chariot, he saw the prosperous hermit settlements of the sages who had found peace, on both the beautiful banks of the Sarasvati, which was so congenial to the *rishi* clans. Knowing of his coming, his rejoicing subjects went forth from Brahmāvarta, and welcomed him with song and music and paeans of praise. In Brahmāvarta stands the prosperous city of Barhishmatī, on the spot where the fur had fallen when the Lord of the Sacrifice, incarnate as the Boar, shook His body ; those hairs had grown into *darbha* and *kāśa* grass, which retained a perennial verdure ; and with them the *rishis* put to rout the despoilers of sacrifices and worshipped Vishnu. And there the great Lord Manu had worshipped the Lord of the Sacrifice, spreading *kuśa* and *kāśa* grass on the ground, and obtained from Him dominion over the earth (26-31).

Reaching that city, Barhishmatī, his abode, the all-powerful one went to his own home there where the three kinds of affliction could gain no foothold. And he enjoyed, in the company of his wife and his people, all pleasures without detriment to the pursuit of the other ends of life, his unsullied fame being sung at dawn by the celestial singers and their womenfolk,

while his own heart delighted in hearing the tales of Hari with rapt attention. Though he could command at will all delights that he had a fancy to, his enjoyments could not cause the sage-like Manu, the son of Svayambhū, to fall from the path of righteousness, for he was devoted to the Lord. And so the long years of his reign as Manu were not spent in vain, since he passed his time hearing the praises of Vishnu uttered, or meditating on Him, composing panegyrics on Him, or speaking them. He thus spent his whole reign, which lasted for seventy-one yuga cycles, remaining secure against the sway of the three *guṇas* by his perpetual absorption in thoughts of Vāsudeva. How could the sufferings to which the body and the mind are susceptible, or those that descend upon one from the celestial world, or those others that are produced by the actions of men or by natural causes, afflict one who has put his trust in Hari, O Vidura ! I have now told you the marvellous story of the first King, Manu, who deserves to be ever acclaimed, who was always promoting the good of all creatures, and who, questioned by the sages, expounded the Dharmas common to all men, as well as the special *dharma*s connected with *varṇa* and *āśrama*. Listen now, while I describe the greatness of his daughter. (32-39).

CHAPTER XXIII

KARDAMA'S YOGIC PLEASURES

Maitreya said : When her parents had left, the good lady served her husband lovingly, skilled as she was in anticipating every wish of his, even as Bhavānī serves the Lord Bhava. Wholly eschewing passion, guile, malice, covetousness, sin and pride, she propitiated him, who was a man of extraordinary power, by waiting upon him with the utmost respect and serving him with unwearied vigilance and zeal, sustained by implicit faith in his word. Keeping herself pure in body and mind, and restraining the senses, she spoke sweetly and attended to his wants with tender solicitude (1-3).

He, the foremost of celestial sages, noticed that the daughter of Manu, who was devoted to him and hoped for great favours from the husband who was greater than the gods, had become weak and thin by the practice of vows over long years, and he was overcome with remorseful compassion. He spoke to her words that came faltering from love. Kardama said: 'I am pleased with you, O daughter of Manu, for the diligent service and whole-hearted devotion that you have given me, treating me with the most exalted consideration. You have not hesitated to sacrifice for my sake that body which is dear to every creature—and yours is so admirable in every way. You shall see for yourself, thanks to the superhuman vision that I shall bestow upon you, how you too have, by your faithful service to me, made your own those favours from the Lord, which I, devoted to my own *dharma*, have won by the single-mindedness with which I have applied myself to austerities, meditation and worship; favours that are attended by no peril and bring no grief in their wake. How trivial are those enjoyments which may be upset by the knitting of the brow of the exalted Lord of the mighty prowess! You, who have won the fruit of your efforts, shall know the divine joys which your fidelity to your own *dharma* has brought you, and which are beyond the reach of even kings who are puffed up with false notions of their own importance' (4-8).

Seeing that her husband, who spoke thus, had won mastery over the *yogic* powers and the various *upāsānās* that had been the means of securing them, the gentle dame shed all her cares. And in a voice that hesitated from loving modesty, she addressed him with an engagingly timid look on her smiling face (9).

Devahūti said: 'O best of Brahmanas, who are capable in all things, all this that you have spoken of is indisputably in your power, for you are master of all the *yogic* perfections that never go in vain; that I know very well, my lord. But I pray that you grant me the physical union that you promised subject to a stipulation. Great is the gain by way of progeny that faithful wives obtain from spouses of supreme worth. Please contrive the means, such as are prescribed (in

the manuals of love) whereby this body of mine, which has become thin with longing and anguished by the violence of love that you have incited in my breast, my lord, may be fit for such enjoyments. Please also think of a suitable home' (10-11).

Maitreya said : Wishing to do his beloved's pleasure, Kardama, by his yogic power, immediately produced an aerial car that could move at will, O Kshattā. That celestial car could provide all pleasures that the heart desired. It was studded with every kind of gem and filled with wealth and goods of every description, which increased with use. Its pillars were made of precious stones. It was provided with all means for godlike enjoyments, and designed to afford delight in all seasons of the year. It was decked with a variety of banners and buntings, and bright with garlands woven of many kinds of flowers, which attracted the bees humming sweetly. It was furnished in abundance with silks and other fabrics. It invited repose, with its bedsteads, placed in the many upper floors, one above the other, and its couches, fly-whisks and divans. It was adorned with sculptures and carvings everywhere. And it had floors of emerald and raised seats of coral. Its doorways were bright with their thresholds of coral and doors set with diamonds. Its sapphire turrets were topped with gold pots. From its diamond walls set with rubies like eyes, projected wonderful canopies, and there were priceless golden arches over its doorways. It resounded everywhere with the cries of swans and the murmur of doves ; the birds flew up to their carved likenesses and called to them, taking them to be real. With its recreation grounds, bedrooms, retiring rooms, inner and outer courtyards, all designed for comfort, it presented an appearance which made even its creator marvel (12-21).

Seeing that she did not seem too pleased as she gazed on that abode, Kardama, who could read all hearts, said to her, ' Bathing in this pool here, get into the aerial car, my gentle dear. These sacred waters, brought into existence by Vishnu, confer all blessings.' She of the lotus eyes, giving due heed to the words of her husband, entered that pool into which the sancti-

fying waters of the Sarasvati flow, wearing her soiled clothes, her hair matted like a strand, the natural complexion of her body hidden under dirt and her breasts discoloured. In a house under the water she saw a thousand youthful maidens who emitted the scent of lilies. On seeing her, they rose up in all haste and told her, with folded hands, 'We are your handmaidens, we await your orders, what shall we do for you?' Deferentially giving the great lady her bath, using the best unguents, they robed her in a pair of fine silks, and decked her with sparkling jewels very much to her taste. And they served her delectable food and sweet and heady drinks. And then she looked at herself in a mirror; clad in spotless raiment, wearing a wreath, her body shining after an oil bath using fragrant unguents; admired by her maids, who had decorated her with auspicious marks; adorned with every jewel—a medallion on the neck, bracelets and tinkling golden anklets, a golden girdle on the waist, set with many brilliants, and a priceless pearl necklace—and the auspicious saffron mark. And she saw the reflection of her own face with the lovely teeth, the arched eyebrows, and the eyes with their charming, affectionate sidelong glance, rivalling the lotus (22-33).

The moment she thought of the great sage, her beloved husband, she found herself where the Patriarch was, with her women about her. Seeing herself, surrounded by a thousand women, in the presence of her husband, she was amazed at his yogic prowess. On seeing her, who shone with unwonted lustre after her bath, her body beautiful as in the days of her youth, with her lovely breasts modestly covered, and clad in splendid clothes, and a thousand Vidyādhariś waiting upon her, he was seized with desire; and he put her into the aerial car, O slayer of the foe. He, whose glory was in no way dimmed, shone in that car, in the company of the wife whom he loved, his bodily comforts attended to by the Vidyādhariś, like the full moon in the sky, surrounded by the stars, making the beds of lilies bloom. He enjoyed himself for long years, like the god of wealth, going about in the car, with that band of women, who were ornaments of their sex waiting

upon him, and hearing his praises sung by the Siddhas, in the valleys of the great mountain (Meru), the playground of the eight Guardians of the worlds, which were delightful with the gentle breezes, cool and perfumed, which furthered the designs of the god of love, and auspicious with the sounds of the celestial stream (the Gangā) as it fell. He happily spent his time with his beloved in (the celestial gardens) Vaiśrambhaka, Surasana, Nandana, Pushpabhadra and Chaitraratha, and in the Mānasa lake. Ranging over the world like the wind in that extraordinarily bright car, supreme of its kind, which could take him wherever he wanted to go, he surpassed even the gods who commanded aerial cars. What is there that is beyond the reach of the doughty of heart, who put their trust in the feet of the Lord which dispel the sorrows of existence? Having shown his wife the terrestrial globe in all its divisions; with its many wonders, the master-yogi turned back to his hermitage (34-43).

Taking nine different bodies, he spent many years, which passed like an hour, finding joy in dalliance with Manu's daughter, who hungered for union, and gave her endless delight. As she lay with her beautiful husband in that car, on her delightful bed which stimulated passion, she too did not realize the passage of time. As the couple thus enjoyed themselves, with all the puissance won by yoga, and yet were insatiable in love, a hundred years passed like a second. Looking upon her as his other half, and loving her accordingly, he took nine different forms; and he who could read all hearts and gratify every wish, deposited his virility in her, while preserving the detachment of men who have realized the Self. Devahūti forthwith gave birth to nine daughters, who were uniformly beautiful in every limb and emitted the fragrance of the red lotus (44-48).

Divining her husband's intention to renounce the world, the comely and faithful spouse addressed him, forcing herself to smile, while her heart grieved within her. Restraining her tears, she spoke slowly and engagingly, her head bent, as she traced lines on the ground aimlessly with her foot, which glowed with the splendour of her toe-nails. Devahūti said: 'All

that you, O blessed one, promised me you have fulfilled. And yet you must give me assurance against the fears that assail me : I throw myself on your mercy. You should find suitable husbands for your daughters, O Brahman. And there should be some one to redeem me¹ from the miseries of *samsāra*, when you have returned to the forest. I have wasted time enough, my lord, oblivious of the Paramātmān, in my absorption in sense-pleasures. In my obsession with the delights of the senses, I cleaved to you, but without realizing your supreme greatness (as one who had realized the Brahma); but even so let that attachment serve to liberate me from fear. Attachment, which involves one in *samsāra*, if it is ignorantly given to those who are absorbed in the life of the senses, may itself make for complete detachment when it is directed towards the good. Surely, that man is no better than dead, whose natural activities do not tend towards Dharma, inducing in him distaste for the life of pleasure, and thus impelling him to devote himself to the service of the Lord Whose feet are holy. I have without a doubt succumbed to the Lord's Māyā, since though I had you, who could have brought me freedom, I did not long for release' (49-57).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BIRTH OF KAPILA

Maitreya said : When the worthy daughter of Manu thus gave vent to her sense of disillusionment, the compassionate sage answered her, keeping in mind what the Lord Vishnu had told him. The sage said : ' You must not distress yourself, O blameless princess ; very soon the exalted Lord everlasting will enter your womb. You have always lived a dedicated life. Go on worshipping Him with faith and zeal, subjecting yourself to the disciplines, both external and internal, practising austerities and giving gifts ; and you shall meet with all that is good. Thus worshipped by you, the Lord Vishnu will be born as your son, enhancing my fame,

¹ She means a son.

and he will instruct you in the knowledge of the Brahmā and help you sunder the knots of the heart' (1-4).

Maitreya went on : Devahūti, with firm faith in the advice of the Patriarch, founded on her regard for him, worshipped the eternal Lord enshrined in the heart, Who is the Supreme Guru. When a long time had elapsed, the exalted Lord, the Slayer of Madhu, was born of her through the potency of Kardama, like fire from the log of wood. Then was heard the music of celestial instruments in the sky, and the rain-clouds thundered and poured. The Gandharvas sang His praises, and the Apsarases danced with joy. The gods ranging in the sky showered flowers. The four quarters were bright and clear, and so were the waters and the minds of men (5-8).

To that hermitage of Kardama, round which the Sarasvati wound its way, came the Self-existent, accompanied by the sages Marichi and others. Brahmā, with his innate knowledge, was aware that it was the exalted Lord, Who was none other than the Supreme Brahmā, that had taken birth with a fraction of Himself, compact of pure *sattva*, to revive men's knowledge of the Sāṅkhya Sāstra, which imparts true knowledge of the *tattvas*, O slayer of the foe. Welcoming the Lord's intention in this behalf, he spoke to Kardama, his joy showing itself in all his features (9-11).

Brahmā said, ' You, who give honour where honour is due, have honoured me sincerely, my child, by receiving my advice and following it scrupulously. This much service children should render their father, that they willingly accept his advice out of regard for him. These beautiful daughters of yours, my worthy son, shall multiply the world's population with generations of their begetting. Give away your daughters in marriage to the principal sages, paying due regard to character and mutual inclination, and thus spread your fame on earth. I know, O sage, that it is the Primordial Purusha That is now incarnate by His own power of Māyā as Kapila, with a body which is the treasure-house of blessings for all beings. This is the Destroyer of Kaitabha, Who has entered your womb, O daughter of Manu ; He will teach men how to rid themselves of

the residual impressions of *karma* by knowledge and intuition. He of the golden hair and lotus eyes, whose feet bear the lotus mark, will teach you to sever the knot of the heart, which is but ignorance of the Self and false notions in regard to it. And He will then go about the world spreading His teaching. He will be known in the world as Kapila. He will be the supreme head of the Siddhas and will be honoured by the teachers of the Sāṅkhya, and will thus bring you great renown' (12-19).

Maitreya continued: Having thus assured them, Brahmā, the Creator of the worlds, returned, riding on his swan, to his own world, which is beyond heaven, followed by his retinue and accompanied by Nārada and his other, ever-youthful sons. When Brahmā had departed, O Kshattā, Kardama, keeping his advice in mind, gave away his daughters in marriage to the Patriarchs. He married Kalā to Marichi, Anasūyā to Atri, Sraddhā to Angiras, Havirbhū to Pulasthya, Gati, who was a suitable match for him, to Pulaha, the faithful Kriyā to Kratu, Khyāti to Bhṛgu, and Arundhati to Vasishtha. To Atharvan, he gave away Sānti, who strengthens the sacrificial rite. He made the great Brahmanas, who had wedded, and their wives, happy with his solicitous attention and lavish hospitality. Then, taking leave of him, the married sages left, each for his own hermit settlement, having won the highest felicity (20-25).

Knowing that the First of the gods, the Lord Vishnu, had descended into this world, he approached Him in private, and making his prostrations to Him, said: 'Ah! how true it is that when men have long suffered the fires of *samsāra* (as the result of their own sins), the gods bestow their grace on them! He, Whose essential form the renouncers strive to gaze upon by the power of sustained contemplation in lonely places, won by successful yoga practised over many lives—He Himself, the Lord Who is ever intent on strengthening the side of His devotees, has now descended into this family of ours, given over to trivial pleasures, unmindful of His own dignity. To make good Thy word and spread knowledge and propagate the means

of enlightenment among Thy devotees, Thou, O Lord That exaltest them, art now incarnate in my house. The transcendent forms That art Thine are those that most become Thee. But Thou, O Lord, lovest to take, too, those forms that Thy devotees love, though in truth Thou art¹ formless. I seek refuge in Thee whose footstool should be sought directly and revered always by men of discrimination, who are eager to acquire knowledge of the *tattvas*; in Thee in Whom is all majesty, non-attachment, renown, enlightenment, power and opulence. I take refuge in Kapila, the Supreme Lord, Who is paramount over all the powers—Pradhāna (Prakṛti), Puruṣa, Mahat, time, the three-fold ego, the worlds and their Guardians; Who retracts within Himself the entire universe by the power of His intelligence; Who is the omniscient Seer. Be pleased now to listen to my prayers addressed to the Lord of all creatures. My three debts having been discharged, and all my desires having been fulfilled, thanks to Thee, I wish to join the ranks of the renouncers, and treasuring Thee in my heart, I shall go forth as a wanderer, all sorrow shed' (26-34).

The Lord told him, 'What I teach is authoritative, both in regard to matters dealt with in the Vedas and in regard to worldly concerns. It was to make good what I had told you that I have taken birth here, O sage. This incarnation of Mine is for the dissemination of discriminating knowledge of the categories, which would bring self-realization to those who wish to be freed from the bondage of the subtle body. This exceedingly subtle way of attaining the knowledge of the Self has for long years been lost to the world. It was to propagate it again, you must know, that I have taken this body. Go as you please, you have My permission. Having overcome death, which it is so difficult to conquer, by dedicating all your *karmas* to Me, worship Me to win immortality. Seeing in yourself, by the exercise of your mind, Me, the Supreme Soul, the Self-luminous, Who dwells in the hearts of all beings, you shall be freed from all sorrow and attain freedom. To my mother I shall impart the knowledge of the Self,

¹ 'Hast no forms fashioned by Prakṛti' (S).

which uproots all *karmas*, and by means of which one may cross over the perilous seas of *samsāra*' (35-40).

Maitreya said: The Patriarch, thus assured by Kapila, was happy. He went round Him reverently and departed to the penitential woods. The sage, adopting the vow of the contemplatives (that is) non-violence, and putting his trust wholly in the Paramātmā, became a homeless wanderer over the earth, having renounced the fire rites and abjured all attachments. Fixing his mind wholly on the Brahmā That is beyond the world of cause and effect and is absolutely unconditioned, while It lights up all the products of the *guṇas*, and achieving realization thereof by single-minded devotion, he shed the notions of 'Me' and 'Mine' and was unaffected by the pairs of opposites. Aware only of the Self, he looked upon all with an equal eye. With resolute control over the senses, his mind turned inward, he was tranquil like the sea whose waves are stilled. And by developing supreme and loving devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Omniscient Ruler of the *jīva*, he anchored his mind in Him and was freed from the bondage (of ignorance). He saw the exalted Lord, as the Self, as present in all creatures, and all creatures as lodged in the Lord, the Self. With love for the Lord in his heart, looking on all with an equal eye, freed from all likes and dislikes, he attained the Lord (41-47).

CHAPTER XXV

KAPILA TEACHES THE SĀNKHYA

Śaunaka said: 'The exalted Lord Who knows no birth was born into this world of His own free will, by the power of His Mayā, as Kapila, the propagator of the Sāṅkhya Śāstra, in order to enlighten men on the nature of the Self. Though I have listened many a time to the tale of His glory, I can never feel satiety in hearing of him who was the greatest of men and the foremost of yogis. Please tell me—I shall listen with the deepest attention—of those deeds, which are supremely worth telling, which He does in the plenitude

of his prowess, when He takes a body in accordance with the wishes of His devotees' (1-3).

The Sūta said : Questioned by Vidura thus on the Science of the Self, the blessed Maitreya, friend and companion of Dvaipāyana, was pleased ; and he spoke as follows. Maitreya said : When his father had departed to the penitential woods, the blessed Kapila, wishing to please his mother, remained in the Bindu-saras hermitage. Devahūti, remembering the Creator's words, spoke to her son who was seated quietly, having abjured all activity, and who was to teach the world the supreme end of the way of knowledge (4-6).

Devahūti said : ' Plagued by the perpetual hankering of the wicked senses, I am exceedingly weary, O Lord That art perfection itself. Trying to satisfy their insatiable appetite, I am plunged in the darkness of nescience (*samsāra*). Now, after numberless lives, I have been granted in Thee, by Thy Grace, the penetrating eye that can show the way through the insipidated darkness of ignorance. Thou art none other than the exalted Lord, the First Cause, and the Supreme Controller of all *jīvas*, risen like the sun, to serve as its eye the world blinded by ignorance. Thou shouldst, O Lord, dispel the delusion caused by Thee, which makes me cleave to the body and its adjuncts, thinking of them as "me" and "mine". Eager to understand the nature of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, I make my prostrations to Thee, beseeching Thy grace ; for Thou art the haven of refuge, the axe that cuts down the tree of *samsāra* for Thy devotees, the foremost of the knowers of the true *dharma* ' (7-11).

Maitreya said : Hearing and applauding his mother's unexceptionable wish, which could induce the love of liberation in men's minds, he, the goal of those good men who have subdued the self, answered her, a slight smile lighting up his face. The Lord said : ' I consider that the yoga which makes one concentrate on the *Ātman*, is conducive to man's highest good, since it puts an end once for all to joys and sorrows alike. I shall expound to you, O blameless one, that yoga which I taught long ago to the sages who were eager to learn, as well as the ancillary disciplines which make for its

full effectiveness. It is the mind that is the cause alike of bondage and of liberation of the *jīva*. The man who is addicted to the objects of enjoyment, it enslaves ; but it frees from bondage him who is possessed by the love of the Lord. When the mind, rid of the taints of craving, greed and so on, caused by egoistic attachments and notions of " me " and " mine ", becomes pure and equable and impervious to pleasure and pain alike, as the result of cultivating knowledge, non-attachment and devotion, the *jīva* is able to see himself as the *Ātman*, distinct and pure, different from Prakṛti, homogenous, self-luminous, subtle and indivisible, and detached from all concerns ; and he sees Prakṛti denuded of its strength. No other way by which yogis may attain the Brahmā is more easy and auspicious than the way of devotion to the exalted Lord, the Soul in all that is (12-19).

'The enlightened have always known that attachment to objects of desire is a bond that never decays ; but the same attachment, when it is directed towards the saintly, opens the door to liberation. The saintly are those who are forbearing and compassionate. They befriend all creatures. They have no enemies. They are free from all passions. They live the good life taught by the Sastra, and are adorned by their virtues. They give Me their unshakable devotion, having no place in their minds for anything else. For My sake, they have given up all activities and abandoned their kith and kin. They engage in listening to or delivering edifying discourses on Me, which diffuse sweetness and light. As these men are wholly absorbed in Me, they do not know the suffering that various sorrows can inflict. Such are the saintly, O gentle dame, who have shed all attachments. You should desire their company, for they free one from the evils of attachment. In the company of the good one comes to learn the tales that delight the heart and the ear and bring one plenary knowledge of My greatness and power. The man who listens to them develops in quick succession faith in, attachment to, and intense love for Him Who dispels the darkness of nescience. Turning away with distaste from the pleasures of the senses—those

that are known in this world as well as those that are spoken of (in the Veda)—because of the devotion he has come to feel by contemplating My glory in My works, he resolves on controlling the mind; and applying himself to the practice of yoga, he tries to carry out his purpose by (easy and) straightforward *yogic* methods. By eschewing the pleasures of the senses, by knowledge reinforced by detachment, and by yoga and devotion directed towards Me, he attains Me, his own soul, in this very body' (20-27).

Devahūti asked, 'What is the right kind of devotion which one should cultivate towards Thee, and which would be within my competence, and by which I may easily attain Thee That art Freedom? What kind of yoga is that which is taught by Thee, O Lord, That art *moksha* in essence, which has the Lord for its target, and from which one may obtain direct perception of the truth? How is it to be practised, and how many are the ancillary disciplines? Teach me this, O Hari, in such a way that I, silly woman though I be, may easily understand this difficult teaching' (28-30).

Maitreya said: Learning of his mother's wish Kapila, out of love for her through whom he had come into this world, taught her the science of enumeration of the categories (Sāṅkhyā principles), which is known as the Sāṅkhyā, as well as yoga, and the way of intensive devotion. The Lord said: 'Far superior to liberation is that devotion to the Lord which asks for no return, and which comes naturally to the man of undivided mind whose faculties are, as a result of his faithful discharge of ordained duties, continually directed towards the Lord Hari, the embodiment of *sattva*. For such devotion quickly dissipates the subtle body, as the fire in the belly consumes the food that is eaten. Some few there are, devotees of Mine, who are so intensely drawn to the worship of My feet, and whose activities are so wholly bound up with Me, that they are not eager for union with Me, preferring to join in lovingly celebrating My prowess. These saintly men, my mother, see those lovely, transcendental forms of Mine, with gracious face and violet eyes, which confer all boons; and enviable is their good

fortune in holding converse with them. Devotion to Me brings liberation¹, even when they do not want it, to these men, whose minds and senses are ravished by those forms of Mine, with their charming features, their delightful playfulness, smiles and looks and endearing words. Though they (freed from nescience) no longer care for the supreme enjoyments² deriving from Me, the Lord of Māyā, or for the eightfold supernatural powers that follow of their own accord in the wake of devotion to Me, or that opulence which awaits the devotee in Vaikuntha, still they do enjoy unmixed felicity in that world of Mine, the Supreme Lord. Those that are devoted to Me never fall from their state of bliss in that world of pure *sattva*. And they are never caught in the wheel of time, my weapon, since to them I am their very soul, the well-beloved; I am son and companion, teacher and well-wisher and chosen Deity too. I redeem from that *samsāra* which is death, those who renounce this world and the next, discard attachment to that subtle body which goes to both these worlds, to the relations who are affiliated to it in this life, as well as to wealth, cattle, house and home and everything else, and give themselves up wholly to the worship of Me of the myriad faces. The dread fear of *samsāra* cannot be repulsed by any creature in this world without the help of Me, the exalted Lord, paramount over Prakṛti and Puruṣa, and the Inner Ruler of all. It is from fear of Me that the wind blows, the sun shines, Indra sends down showers, fire burns and death prevails. By the practice of devotion, reinforced by knowledge and renunciation, yogis take shelter under My feet, where there is no cause of fear, and win *moksha*. Only by that steadfastness of mind which is gained by concentrating it on Me through intense and sustained devotion can men in this world achieve the supreme good (*moksha*)' (31-44).

¹ (lit.) 'My exceedingly subtle state'. ² Such as are to be found in *Brahmā's* world.

CHAPTER XXVI

PURUSHA AND PRAKṚTI

The exalted Lord continued His teaching.

‘And now I shall describe to you the distinctive characteristics of the several *tattvas* (principles), by knowledge of which a man is freed from the sway of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti. I shall expound the knowledge which leads to Self-realization and sunders the knot of egotism in the heart, and which is therefore spoken of as the means to *moksha*. The Purusha (spirit as *jīva*) is none other than the *Ātman* Itself, which knows no beginning, is unconditioned by attributes, and is distinct from Prakṛti. Self-luminous, it shines within, and the world is manifest by reason of association with it. He (the *jīva*) who is in truth all-powerful, took to himself by chance the unmanifest Prakṛti, the power of the Lord Vishnu, composed of the *guṇas*, who approached him, impelled by the spirit of play. As he looked at her, who was propagating creatures of many kinds of the same nature as herself by means of the *guṇas*, the *jīva* became oblivious of his own true nature, thanks to her power of eclipsing the intelligence of the *jīva* in the transmigratory life. By identifying himself with what is alien¹ to him, he comes to regard himself as the doer of actions, which are in fact the work of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti. It is this notion of agency which constitutes the bondage of the *jīva*, who in reality knows no activity, and is but the witness. And it is this bondage of *karma* which makes him, who is intrinsically free, helplessly experience the fruits of activity, and undergo the travails of *samsāra*, though in truth his essence is pure bliss. Men of wisdom hold that, while Prakṛti is responsible for the *jīva*’s looking upon himself as the body, the organs and the gods who direct them, it is the Purusha, who is distinct from Prakṛti, that is responsible for his regarding himself as agent and experiencer of happiness and misery’ (1-8).

¹ i.e. with Prakṛti and her products, such as the body, by *adhyāsa*, or illegitimate transference of her qualities to himself and *vice versa* (S).

Devahūti prayed, 'Please explain to me, All-Highest, the characteristics of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, who are responsible for the existence of the universe, since the entire world of cause and effect partakes of their nature' (9).

The Lord said: 'Prakṛti is but Pradhāna, which is composed of the three *guṇas* and is unmanifest, eternal and undifferentiated, while it is the base of all particulars and is present in all causes and effects. That body of twenty-four *tattvas*, consisting of four groups of five, five, four and ten, is spoken of as the Brahmā¹ appearing as the products (evolutes) of Pradhāna. The gross elements are five—earth, water, fire, air and *ākāśa* (space). The subtle elements, smell and the rest, are also five in my view. The organs are ten in all—(the organs of cognition, that is) the ears, the skin, the eyes, the palate and the nose, and (the organs of action, that is,) the tongue, the hands, the feet, the penis and the anus, the tenth. The internal organ shows a fourfold differentiation as mind, *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkāra* (ego) and *chitta* (reason), distinguished by different characteristic functions. The number of different states of the conditioned Brahma, as I have reckoned them, is accepted by others as well. The twenty-fifth *tattva* is known as time (10-15).

'But some speak of time as the power of *Īśvara*,² of which the *jīva* goes in fear, being under the sway of nescience, and deluded by egoism (in regard to the body) into looking upon himself as agent. The Lord, Who is the cause of the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* in unmodified Prakṛti, is described as *Kāla* (time), O daughter of Manu. He, by His own power of *Māyā*, is uninterruptedly and integrally present in all creatures as the Inner Controller, and in the world without as time (16-18).

'When the equilibrium of the *guṇas* was disturbed in Prakṛti, the womb from which the universe is delivered, as the consequence of the *jīvas*' (residual) *karmas*,

¹ It means that for *Upasānā* the group of twenty-five is to be meditated upon as the Brahmā. ² *Īśvara*, with whom *jīva* is identified, is reckoned as the twenty-fifth principle; where the two are regarded as different, the principles are twenty-six.

the Supreme Lord deposited in it His own virility (His *Chit-śakti* or power of intelligence); and Prakṛti thereupon gave birth to the Mahat-tattva of the golden lustre. In manifesting the phenomenal world, the Mahat, which is immune from destruction or distraction, and which held within itself the sprouting seed of the universe, dispelled by its own splendour the intense darkness of Pralaya which had obscured it. That *chitta*, which is compact of pure *sattva* and is transparently clear and undisturbed by the passions, and which, being the abode of the Lord, is called Vāsudeva, is of the nature of Mahat. Transparent clarity, immutability and freedom from passion are the essential characteristics of the *chitta*, as of water in its pristine condition (19-22).

‘From the principle of Mahat, born of the Lord’s energy (*Chit-śakti*), as it underwent modification, arose the ego of three kinds, possessed of the power of action, the Vaikārika, the Taijasa and the Tāmasa; from which originated, respectively, the mind, the organs of cognition and action, and the gross elements. It is this ego that is spoken of as the Lord of the thousand heads (hoods), Ananta, the Everlasting, Who is known by the name of Sankarshana, and Who is the source of the mind, the senses, and the gross elements. The ego may be described as functioning as agent, instrument, or effect, or as displaying different characteristics, tranquillity, frightfulness and dullness (23-26).

From the Vaikārika-ahamkāra, as it underwent modification, emerged the category called mind, whose thoughts and speculations give rise to desires. This is spoken of as the Lord Aniruddha, the Ruler of the senses, Who is dark-blue like the autumn lily and whom yogis can propitiate only slowly by perseverance. From the Taijasa-ahamkāra, as it underwent modification, emerged, O faithful spouse, the principle of Buddhi (intellect). The different characteristics of Buddhi are the ability to apprehend substances, and the power of helping the senses to perform their functions by distinguishing between their objects; it also exhibits such modes as doubting, misapprehension, certain knowledge, memory and sleep. It is only from the Taijasa-

ahamkāra that all the organs, both those of cognition and of action, are evolved. For it is in the Prāṇa (vital breath) that the power of action inheres. Likewise the power of perception is inherent in the Buddhi¹ (27-31).

From the Tāmāsa-ahamkāra, as it underwent modification thanks to the power of the Lord, the subtle element sound emerged, and from that evolved the gross element *ākāśa*. The ear is the perceiver of sound. The characteristics of sound, as described by the learned, are those of signifying an object or idea, or indicating the presence of the speaker (or seer) whose words are heard; sound is also the subtle element of *ākāśa*. The gross element *ākāśa* is perceived only through its effects; it accommodates all creatures; it is by reference to it that we speak of "outside" and "inside"; and it is the support of the life-breath, the senses and the mind. From *ākāśa*, distinguished by the presence in it of the subtle element sound, as it underwent modification by the action of time, there emerged the subtle element touch, and from that was produced air. It is the skin that is the seat of the sense of touch. Apprehension of softness, hardness, cold and heat is the property of the sense of touch; which is also the subtle element of air. The presence of air is revealed only by its activities—it shakes, sweeps things together, reaches out everywhere, leads to the perception of sounds and smells, and energizes all organs. From air, with the subtle element touch in it, as it underwent modification by the prompting of time, emerged colour. And from colour came *tejas* (fire and light). The faculty of vision (the eye) is the perceiver of colour. The specific characteristic of colour, O gentle dame, is its power of investing substances with form. It cannot be perceived apart from the substance, and it has the same shape and appearance. And it is the unique feature of fire. Fire serves to illuminate, to cook, to cause hunger and thirst and thus prompt eating and drinking, to dispel cold, and to cause things to dry up. When *tejas*, with its subtle element colour,

¹ 'And both Buddhi and Prāṇa are the products of the *Taijasa*,' may be understood after 'Buddhi'.

underwent modification by the prompting of Destiny, the subtle element taste emerged, and from that came water. The palate (faculty of taste) is the perceiver of taste. The one primal *rasa* (sweetness) is modified by combining with other physical substances, resulting in different tastes—the astringent, the sweet, the bitter, the pungent, the sour and the salt. Wetting, making substances cohesive, giving satisfaction, sustaining life, removing the pangs of thirst, softening substances, dispelling heat, and being in perennial supply—these are the properties of water. From water, which has taste for its subtle element, as it underwent modification under the prompting of time, emerged the subtle element smell, and therefrom the earth. It is the nose that detects smell. The one pristine smell is changed, according to the admixture in different proportions of other substances, into a variety of smells—mixed smells, bad smells, rich perfumes, mild fragrance, strong odours and sour smells. The supply of materials for fashioning the images in which the Brahmā may be contemplated; stable and independent existence; the capacity to serve as base and support for other substances; the property of demarcating the limits of other elements; and being the medium for the manifestation of all creatures and the efflorescence of their qualities—these are the characteristic properties of the earth (32-46).

‘The faculty of hearing is so called because it perceives sound, the specific quality of *ākāśa*; the tactile sense is that which perceives touch, the specific attribute of air; the faculty of vision is that which perceives colour, the specific property of *tejas* (fire); the faculty of taste is that which perceives flavour, the specific virtue of water; the sense of smell is that which perceives odour, the specific characteristic of the earth. The specific quality of the cause is found in the effect, by reason of the continuing presence of the cause in it. Therefore the specific qualities of all the gross elements are to be found only in the earth (47-49).

‘When these seven, Mahat and the rest, remained separate and unmixed with each other, the Sovereign Lord, Creator of the world, entered them, with time, *karma* (the past *karmas* of *jīvas*) and the *guṇas*. When

they, thus activated by Him, combined, they produced the inanimate cosmic egg from which emerged the cosmic *jīva*. This egg, known as Viśeṣha, had several covers, water and the rest, one over the other, each of these being ten times larger than that which it covered, while Pradhāna enclosed them all. And the cosmic egg contained within itself the world complex, which is a form of the exalted Lord Hari (50-52).

‘Rousing Himself to activity and taking His place in that luminous egg which lay on the waters, the Great God (Hari) channelled the space within it in many ways. The mouth of the Viraj was first differentiated, and the faculty of speech entered¹ it, and the god of fire along with it. Then the nostrils were differentiated, and the faculty of smell entered them along with the vital breath,² and thereafter Vāyu (the deity presiding over air). The eyes were differentiated, and into them entered the faculty of sight, and the sun-god entered after it. The ears were differentiated, and into them entered the faculty of hearing, and then the gods presiding over the directions. The skin of the *Viraj* was differentiated; the hair on the body, on the face and on the head entered it, and then the annuals and the herbage. The penis was differentiated, and the semen entered it, and then the gods who preside over the waters. The anus was differentiated, and into it entered the Apāna air and the god of death, the terror of the worlds. The hands were differentiated, and into them entered strength, and then the ruler of heaven (Indra). The feet were differentiated, and into them entered the power of gait, and Hari (Vishnu) thereafter. The blood-vessels were differentiated, and therein were blood and other fluids, and after them the river-gods entered them. The stomach was differentiated, and therein appeared hunger and thirst, and the god of ocean. Then his (Viraj’s) heart was differentiated, and in that was the mind, and from the mind was born the moon. And in the heart were also the intellect,

¹ (*lit.*) ‘arose in it’. ‘The god of fire’, etc. are those who preside over the respective faculties. ² The vital breath should be understood as accompanying every faculty.

with the Lord of Speech (Brahmā); the ego, with Rudra; and the *chitta*, with the Kshetrajna (53-61).

'The gods, who were now installed in their different charges, found that they could not animate the Viraj (cosmic body). They however made another effort to do so, by entering the organs over which they presided. Fire entered the mouth along with speech, but the Viraj did not rise up. Air entered the nostrils with smell, but the Viraj did not rise up. The sun entered the eyes with the faculty of sight, but the Viraj did not rise up. The divinities presiding over the directions entered the ears, along with the faculty of hearing, but the Viraj did not rise up. The annuals and herbage entered the skin, along with the hair, but the Viraj did not rise up. The gods who preside over the waters entered the penis along with the semen, but the Viraj did not rise up. Death entered the anus along with the Apāna air, but the Viraj did not rise up. Indra entered the hand along with strength, but the Viraj did not rise up. Vishnu entered the feet along with the power of gait, but the Viraj did not rise up. The gods presiding over the rivers entered the blood-vessels, with blood and other fluids, but the Viraj did not rise up. The ocean entered the belly along with hunger and thirst, but the Viraj did not rise up. The moon entered the heart with the mind, but the Viraj did not rise up. Brahmā, too, entered the heart, with the intellect, but the Viraj did not rise up. Rudra entered the heart, with the ego, but the Viraj did not rise up. But the moment the Kshetrajna entered the heart, with the *chitta*, the cosmic Purusha rose up from the waters. It is like what happens in the case of the sleeper, whom the vital breath, the senses, the mind and the intellect would be unable to rouse by their own unaided power, unless the *jīva* was there. By the practice of devotion to the Supreme Lord, by cultivation of distaste for other things, and by the concentration of mind achieved through *yogic* discipline, one should gain the knowledge that would enable one to distinguish the *Ātman* within (the Kshetrajna), from the body complex, and deeply meditate on Him (the Paramātmā)' (62-72).

CHAPTER XXVII

PRAKṚTI AND PURUṢA DISTINGUISHED

The exalted Lord went on: 'The Puruṣa (*jīva*) though lodged in the body is, like the reflection of the sun in water, not really affected by the vicissitudes caused by Prakṛti (matter); because being devoid of qualities he does not act, and so is immutable. But when he becomes oblivious of his own true Self, and identifies it with the body, he becomes attached to the products of Prakṛti, and deludes himself into thinking that he is an active agent. Because of this, he is helplessly entangled in the transmigratory life as the result of the evil consequences of *karma* done from attachment to the body; and knowing no peace of mind, passes into all sorts of births, high, low and middling. Though in truth the consequences of *karma* are not real for the *Ātman*, the *jīva* is not freed from them so long as the mind is obsessed with objects of experience, just as the dreamer cannot shake off the hallucination of catastrophe (1-4).

'Therefore the aspirant should, by steady effort, establish control over the mind, which is infatuated with the objects of the senses, by intense application to devotion and the development of profound distaste for the world. He should by repeated efforts steady the mind, by practising with faith and zeal the internal and other *yogic* disciplines. Giving his sincere devotion to Me and listening to the tale of My glories; learning to look upon all creatures with an equal eye; abjuring all violence and renouncing all attachments; practising celibacy and the habit of speaking as little as possible; observing his own *Dharma*, rendered the more potent by its dedication to the Lord; content with what comes unsought; eating moderately and dwelling in solitary places; cultivating tranquillity of spirit and friendly sympathy and fellow-feeling towards all; developing self-control and ceasing to entertain the feeling of "me" and "mine" towards the body and those connected with him through it—he will cultivate, by these various means, the knowledge which brings him the realization of the true nature of Prakṛti and

Purusha, and thus free himself from the three states of consciousness,¹ and (consequently) from the sense of difference. He will, then, realize his own pure Self, apprehending it by means of the self limited by the ego, as one sees the sun by means of (its image in) the eye. And he will thus attain the Brahmā, unqualified by limiting adjuncts, as It is reflected in the illusory ego. And that Brahmā is the substratum of the cause of the universe (the Pradhāna). It reveals like the eye the world of effects, and It is continuously present in all cause and effect. It is transcendent perfection. Just as the reflection of the sun in water is noticed when it is reflected on some solid surface, and this draws the attention of the beholder to the reflection in the water, and that, again, to the sun in the sky; similarly it is by means of the reflection of the *Ātman* in the body, the faculties and the mind, that attention is drawn to the reflection of the *Ātman* in the triform ego, and then, it is through the ego reflecting the *Ātman* that the *Ātman*, as absolute consciousness, comes to be realized. That which alone remains sleepless and devoid of the egoistic consciousness, when the gross and subtle elements, the organs, the mind, the intellect and all else are quiescent, merged in *avidyā* (nescience)—that is the *Ātman*. From the loss of the ego-consciousness (in that state), the *jīva* concludes that he himself is lost, and is as distraught as the man who, because his wealth is lost, grieves as if he himself were lost. But even then the *Ātman* is the support and the illuminator of the body and of the ego that goes with it. This can be realized by the exercise of analytical discrimination' (5-16).

Devahūti asked, 'Prakṛti can never leave the Purusha alone, O Brahman of infinite wisdom, because both are coeternal and interdependent. Even as smell cannot subsist apart from the earth, or taste apart from the waters, the Buddhi (Prakṛti) and Purusha cannot exist without each other. So long as the *guṇas* of Prakṛti continue to exist, how can the Purusha who, though a non-doer, is entangled in the results of *karma* because of his dependence on the *guṇas*, achieve freedom? Though the dire peril of *samsāra* might appear

¹ Attaining the fourth or *turiya* state, that of the pure Brahmā.

to be largely averted by discriminating knowledge of the *Ātman*, it is bound to raise its head again and again so long as the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, the basic cause of *samsāra*, persist' (17-20).

The Lord replied, 'When the yogi, with a mind purified by the disinterested practice of his own Dharma, applies himself to the cultivation of intense devotion to Me, a devotion fed by constant and long listening to the tale of My glories, the realization of the nature of Prakṛti and Puruṣha, the development of the non-attachment that is proof against desires, the practice of yoga with the observance of austerities, and uninterrupted and intense contemplation,—Prakṛti, assailed day and night by the combined force of these practices, gradually disappears in this very life, consumed as the fire-stick is by the fire it produces. When the *jīva* has discarded her, having gained all the experiences she could offer him, and come to realize that she was the cause of all evil, she can never more involve him in *samsāra*, since he has realized his freedom and is absorbed in the Bliss of the Self. The dream which haunts the sleeper, boding dire peril, is powerless to delude him when he wakes. Likewise, Prakṛti can never harm him who has realized the truth about Prakṛti and Puruṣha, and finding all delight in the Self, gives his mind wholly to Me. When the sage has by perseverance in the course of many lives become devoted wholly to the Self in this manner and developed a distaste for all else from the *Brahmā-loka* downwards, he, my devotee, comes to love Me. Awakening to the truth of the Self by My abounding grace, all his doubts dispelled by direct knowledge, the man of heroic resolution easily attains here and now the supreme end of life, the experience of his own essential Self, which is Bliss, and which, known as *Kaivalya* (liberation), rests on Me. Having won that state, the yogi is never more involved in the transmigratory existence, after his subtle body is destroyed. If the heart of the perfected yogi does not succumb to the supernatural powers that can be won only through yoga, and come in abundance, he shall reach Me, the Goal Everlasting, my mother, and death will not have the laugh of him' (21-30).

CHAPTER XXVIII

YOGA AND MEDITATION

The Lord said: 'And now, I shall describe, O Princess, the distinctive features of the yoga which prescribes some object by which the mind can support itself in meditation. Only by practising this yoga faithfully, does the mind attain serenity and take the way that leads to the Brahmā. The scrupulous practice of one's own Dharma to the best of one's ability; the abjuring of what would be detrimental to one's Dharma; contentment with what comes one's way by chance; the rendering of all honour to those who have realized the Self; abstaining from the practice of duties subserving the three ends of life that are prized by the householder; devotion to the Dharma whose goal is *moksha*; moderation in eating food, which must be pure; living in lonely and peaceful places; the practice of non-injury and loving kindness and of truth-speaking; the refraining from what belongs to others, and the earning of just what will suffice for one's own needs; celibacy, the practice of austerities, the cultivation of personal purity, the study of the Vedas, and the worship of the Supreme Purusha; avoidance of vain speech; the effortless maintenance of a steady posture, and establishment of gradual control over the breath; the withdrawal of the senses, by an effort of the mind, from their objects, and the containing of them within; the retention of the life-breath with the mind in each of the psychic centres; meditation on the pastimes of the Lord of Vaikuntha, and then, the stilling of the mind to mirror the *Ātman*—it is by these and other appropriate means that the yogi, having established breath-control, should steadily and unweariedly strive, by an effort of will, to incline to the Lord the unruly mind, which hankers after the objects of the senses (1-7).

'Having obtained by practice mastery over easy posture, he should seat himself in a clean and pure place on a suitable seat, and holding himself comfortably with body erect, practise breath-control. He should cleanse the passages through which the breath goes in

and out by filling the lungs, retaining the breath, and then expelling it or by proceeding in the reverse order, thus steadying the mind and preventing its lapsing into unsteadiness. The mind of the yogi, who has controlled his breath, soon becomes pure, even as gold, smelted by fire into which air is blown, voids dross. One should burn up the humours by means of breath-control, dispel sins by steadying the mind, wean the senses from their objects by drawing them inward, and eradicate by meditation the qualities which turn one away from God (8-11).

‘When the mind has become pure and steady by the exercise of breath-control and other devices, one should, with one’s eyes bent on the tip of the nose, meditate upon the image of the exalted Lord conjured up by the mind’s eye—with the gracious lotus face, the eyes violet like the inside of the lotus flower and a complexion dark-blue like the lily; carrying the conch-shell, the discus and the mace; clad in silks yellow like the filaments of the lotus in bloom; with the Śrīvatsa mark on the breast, and the dazzling Kausthubha jewel on the neck; the whole body swathed in the garland of wild flowers, with the murmur of drunken bees in it, and bedecked with priceless pearl necklaces, bracelets, crown, anklets and armlets, and the girdle lying bright on the waist. He should think of Him as seated in the heart-lotus of His devotees, looking extraordinarily winsome and serene, bringing joy at once to their minds and eyes by vouchsafing them a vision of that marvellous loveliness; receiving always the homage of all the worlds; eternally youthful and ever solicitous to shed His Grace on His own. Thus should he go on contemplating in its entirety the form of the Lord, Whose sanctifying glory calls for praise and Who has conferred endless renown on those whose fame purifies the hearer, until such time as the mind unswervingly cleaves to it. He should, further, meditate on Him, with a heart full of the love that asks for no return, as standing, walking, sitting, lying down, or dwelling in the cave of the heart, or engaged in His enchanting pastimes (12-19).

‘When the yogi is satisfied that his mind securely rests on the form of the Lord as a whole, with all its

limbs, he should concentrate it exclusively on the limbs, one by one. Let him meditate on the lotus feet of the Lord bearing the marks of the thunderbolt, the goad, the flag and the lotus, and expelling, by the brightness of their high toe-nails, which look like the orbéd moon and are a brilliant red in colour, the darkness in the hearts of the great devotees. Let his mind dwell long and lovingly on that lotus foot ; for by receiving on His head the purifying waters of the mighty stream that had taken its rise from it, when water was poured on it, Siva Himself had become truly Siva (supremely blest) ; and it destroys like the thunderbolt the mountain of sin in the mind of him who thinks on it. Let him treasure in his heart the shanks of the Supreme Lord Who knows no birth, which Lakshmi of the lotus eyes, mother of the Creator of the universe, to whom the gods do homage, places on her thighs and dandles with hands that glow like tender shoots ; and likewise on the thighs, those exhaustless sources of strength, as they shine on the shoulders of Suparṇa like the *atasī* bloom, and on the waist hugged by the gold zone lying over the opulent raiment of yellow silk that reaches down to the ankles. Let him meditate on the pit of the navel in His belly, which holds all the worlds, that navel from which rose the world-lotus which was the home of the Self-created ; likewise, on the nipples, like great emeralds, which appear white under the dazzling brightness of His pearl necklace. Let him lodge in his mind the bosom of the Lord Who excels all and to Whom all the worlds do homage, that bosom which is the home of the Goddess of Prosperity, and the neck which adds to the beauty of the Kausthubha jewel ; these bring the eyes and the mind of the beholder supreme contentment. Let him meditate on the arms, with their armlets burnished by the revolving of the Mandara mountain, on which depend the Guardians of the worlds ; on the discus with its thousand spokes, irresistible in its power, and on the conch-shell, like a royal swan in the lotus of His cupped hands. Let him think on the (mace) Kaumodikī which is dear to the Lord, and which is daubed with the miry gore of the hosts of the foe ; on the garland, whence comes the hum of the

swarm of bees ; and on the gem of the purest ray which lies on His neck and symbolizes the *jīva* (20-28).

‘ Let his thoughts dwell on the lotus face of the Lord, Who takes a human form in His abounding compassion for His devotees, with the lofty nose and the bright cheeks irradiated, as by lightning flashes, by the sparkle of the dangling ear-pendants. He should meditate with eager alertness on that face with its mass of curly locks, its lotus eyes and dancing eyebrows, which rises up before his mind’s eye, and which throws into the shade by its splendour the bee-haunted lotus, attended by two fishes, in which Śrī makes her abode. Let him dwell long, and with infinite love in his heart, on the exceedingly kind look, accompanied by a loving smile, with which His eyes linger on the devotee, quenching the unbearable grief caused by the three kinds of suffering, and raining blessings on him. Let him meditate on the captivating smile of Hari that can dry up the ocean-flood of tears, caused by their intense sufferings, of those who have taken refuge in Him, and on those arched eyebrows that lavish all blessings, fashioned in the interests of the sages, by His unique power of *Māyā*, for the utter confusion of the god of love. Dwelling with rapture on the glorious laughter of Vishnu, Who is known in the heart drenched with loving devotion, laughter which is so lovely, displaying as it does the row of beautiful little teeth like *kunda* buds, crimsoned by the scarlet glory of His nether lip, let him not allow his mind to stray away from it (29-33).

‘ When he has thus come to love the Lord intensely, his heart melting in a flood of devotion, his body athrill with joy, tears gushing forth in the intolerable anguish of his yearning, he gradually detaches that fish-hook, the mind (from the object of meditation). Then the mind, being no longer engaged with an object, finds itself without a support, having attained absolute detachment (from the objects of the senses), and dies down like the flame (of the lamp when the wick is burnt out). In that state, the Puruṣha (*jīva*) having freed himself from the perpetual flux of the *gunas*, sees the *Ātman*, one and integral, without the dichotomy of “seer” and “seen”. By reason of this final withdrawal of the

mind, the Purusha rests secure in his identity with the Brahmā, Which is beyond the reach of joy and sorrow ; having gained direct knowledge of the Self, he sees clearly that the cause and the experiencer of joy and sorrow is the illusory ego, the agent, and not the Self, as he had imagined (34-36).

‘The perfected yogi, who has reached this final stage, is as unconscious of the body as the man who is dead drunk is of the cloth wound round his waist ; and if by chance it should get up and stand where it is, or go elsewhere and come back, he would know nothing of it, because he has realized the Self. The body survives with the faculties intact so long as there remains unexpended any part of his past *karmas* which were responsible for his taking this body, since its existence is bound up with the residual impressions of those *karmas*. But he who has attained the consummation of *samādhi* in yoga and awakened to the truth of the Self, will never more look with a sense of possession upon the body, which seems to him as unreal as a dream-body, or on those who are connected with him through it. Just as a man is seen to be different from his son, and possessions, however much he might identify himself with them, so is the Purusha (the seer) different from the body and its adjuncts, which he identifies with himself. The fire in a burning brand is different from the brand, from the spark that flies from it and from the smoke it emits, though all of them might be confounded with it (by the ignorant) ; as it is different, too, from the torch which is now burning. Likewise the *Ātman*, the witness, is different from the elements, the senses and the inner organ ; what is called the Brahmā is different from what is called the *jīva* ; and the exalted Lord is different from the Pradhāna¹ (37-41).

‘At the same time, he should learn to see the *Ātman* in all creatures, and all creatures in the *Ātman*, making no difference between them, even as in all creatures he recognizes the presence of the gross elements. Just as fire looks different in the different logs that it burns,

¹ While verse 41 emphasizes the difference due to the ‘upādhis’ or qualifying adjuncts, verse 43 emphasizes the unity of the *Ātman* under the diversity of appearance.

because of the difference between the logs, so does the *Ātman* seem different in the different bodies he tenants. The yogi, vanquishing thus the inscrutable *Māyā* of the Lord, which deludes the *jīva* and is the cause of the phenomenal world, rests secure in his own true state as the *Brahmā*' (42-44).

CHAPTER XXIX

BHAKTI-YOGA

Devahūti said, 'You have described the distinguishing characteristics of Mahat and the rest, of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, as taught by the Sāṅkhya, so that by these characteristics one may learn their true nature. And you have also described Bhakti-yoga, which is the fruit of such knowledge. Please tell me at length and in detail of the different ways in which that yoga may be practised. Be pleased, also, O Lord, to describe to me the transmigratory vicissitudes to which all creatures are subject. The man who comes to know of these vicissitudes develops distaste towards all things here and elsewhere. Please also tell me, O Lord That art paramount over all powers, of the true nature of all-powerful time, Thy other Self, from fear of which men live righteously. You have appeared as a veritable sun of yoga, to awaken from their long slumber the ignorant men plunged in the endless darkness (of *samsāra*), clinging with passionate possessiveness to illusions (the world of phenomena) and wearied with their addiction to *karma*.' (1-5).

Maitreya said: Hearing those charming words of his mother, the great sage was pleased; and applauding them, he answered her under the urge of his infinite compassion, O first of the Kurus. The Lord said: 'There are many ways of practising Bhakti-yoga, dear mother. Men's purposes differ according to their dispositions. If a man who is irascible and dominated by the sense of difference displays devotion to Me, whether from the desire to harm others, from hypocrisy, or from jealousy, he is a *tāmasic* devotee. If another,

likewise labouring under the sense of difference, worships Me in images and so on, actuated by the desire for enjoyment, for fame or for sovereign power, he is a *rājasīc* devotee. He who, while entertaining the sense of difference, worships Me in order to free himself from his *karmas*, or from the desire to dedicate all work to Me, or simply from the feeling that worship is his duty, is a *sāttvic* devotee. The unbroken streaming of the mind towards Me, the Supreme Spirit, the Dweller in the cave of the heart—much like the flowing of the Gangā waters to the sea—which starts the moment one hears My glorious qualities praised—that is the mark of the devotion that is *nirguṇa*, inspired by no ulterior end and free from notions of difference (6-12).

‘Such devotees will not accept anything whatever—translation to My world, or such opulence and puissance as is Mine, close proximity to Me, assimilation to My semblance, or even absorption in My essence—should any of these things be offered them, if it meant forgoing My service. It is this that is called the ultimate Bhakti-yoga, which leads one beyond the sway of the three *guṇas* to the attainment of My state, (that of the Brahmanā). By means of the attentive and disinterested practice of one’s own duties; by the devout and steady performance of My worship with no hankering for the fruits thereof, and without causing any injury or serious inconvenience to others; by gazing with reverence on My image or on any other vehicle in which I am invoked, lovingly touching it, offering worship with the singing of hymns and the making of prostrations; learning to look on Me as present in all creatures; cultivating courage and detachment; showing great respect to the saintly, sympathy to the lowly, and friendship to one’s equals; practising the internal and external disciplines; listening to the exposition of the Sāstra that teaches discrimination between the Self and the non-Self; devoutly reciting My names; cultivating perfect sincerity and straightforwardness; consorting with the virtuous, and abjuring the attitude of possessiveness—by these means the mind of the man who devotes himself to the Dharma that leads to Me is purified, and it turns to Me the moment it hears My praises sung. Just as the

fragrance that is carried by the air from its source takes possession of the sense of smell, so does the mind, devoted to yoga and steadied by it, appropriate Me, the Paramatman (13-20).

‘I am ever present in all creatures as the Inner Ruler. He who treats Me with contempt there, while pretending to worship Me in an image, makes a farce of worship. He who ignores My presence in all creatures as their Soul and Inner Ruler, and in his folly worships an image, is like one who makes oblations in ashes. The mind of that man can never know peace, who labours under the sense of difference and is so much in love with himself that he develops inveterate hostility to all creatures, and thus hates Me, since I am present in them. The man who condemns all creatures can never hope to propitiate Me, O flawless one, however opulent the worship he might offer Me in an image (21-24).

‘So long as a man does not realize Me in the core of his heart, Me, the Dweller in all hearts, he should worship Me, the Supreme Lord, in images and the like, while scrupulously discharging his duties. To the man who discriminates between himself and another, on the ground of their separate hungers, I come as Death, and I inflict on him the dread travail of *samsāra*. Therefore, while maintaining an equable attitude towards all creatures, men should worship Me suitably in all of them, since I abide in them as the Inner Ruler, by making them gifts, rendering them due honour, or giving them their friendship, as might seem proper (25-27).

‘Living things are superior to those that are inanimate.¹ Higher than the former are the creatures that draw breath, O auspicious dame; greater than these are those that are endowed with consciousness; higher than these are those whose organs of sensation are active. Among those endowed with different senses—touch, taste, smell, hearing and the capacity to distinguish colours—superiority obtains in that order. Those that have two rows of teeth are better than those that have only one. Those that have many feet are better

¹ The purpose of the following is to suggest that the higher the creature the more it is entitled to consideration (S.)

than those that have none. Superior to the former are those that have only four ; and even higher are those that have only two. Among bipeds those who belong to the four *varṇas* are superior to the rest ; and among these the highest is the Brahmana. Among Brahmanas, the man who has learnt the Vedas is superior to others ; superior to him is the man who knows the meaning of the Veda. Higher than he is the man who can help clarify doubts. Better than he is the man who is faithful to his Dharma. Far superior to him is the man who has given up all attachments, and has renounced the fruits of Dharma. Even greater than he is the man who dedicates all actions, and their fruits, and his body (and all other possessions) to Me ; so nothing divides him from Me. I can in fact think of none who is superior to him who has put himself into My hands and renounced all fruits of action in My favour, who makes no difference between creature and creature and has ceased to entertain the egoistic notion that he is the doer. One must mentally offer one's utmost reverence to all creatures, remembering that the Supreme Lord is in them as the Controller of the *jīva* (28-34).

‘ I have now explained to you at length, O daughter of Manu, Bhakti-yoga, as well as Ashtāṅga-yoga. By either of these means one may attain the Supreme Lord. It is this form of the Lord, Who is the Brahmā and the Paramātmā, and Who stands forth as the Pradhāna and the Puruṣa, and as That Which is different from and beyond them both, that is called Daiva (Destiny), since it causes the infinite diversity of the transmigratory existence, by prompting the doing of actions (by the *jīvas*). This form of the Lord is also known as time, which is the cause of the changes that all things undergo. Its power is marvellous, and it inspires terror in all *jīvas*, beginning with that which animates the Mahat, since they are obsessed by the notion of difference. Time, which enters into all creatures as their sustainer, destroys them through the instrumentality of other creatures, and is paramount over all, including those who (like Brahmā), have absolute power over all creatures. For it is none other than the Lord Who is known as Vishnu, the Abode of all creatures, and the

Dispenser of the fruits of the sacrifice. To the Lord Who functions as time, no-one is dear ; He looks upon none as His enemy or as His kin. Ever-vigilant, He, their death, enters into those who are heedless of their own lasting good. It is from fear of Him that the wind blows, the sun shines, the god (Indra) sends down showers, and the hosts of luminaries shed light ; from fear of Him the trees, the creepers and the annuals yield fruit and flower in their season. The rivers run from fear of Him. And it is from fear of Him that the sea does not overflow its bounds, that fire burns, and the earth with its mountains does not sink into the waters. It is by His command that space contains all living beings and the Mahat expands itself into the cosmos enveloped by its seven covers. It is from fear of Him that the gods, who preside over the three *guṇas*, and to whose will this universe of the stationary and the moving is subject, set about their work—creation, and so on—again and again. While He as time is the Creator, bringing about the generation of creatures by other creatures, and is also the Destroyer, Who inflicts death on Death itself, He himself knows neither beginning nor end, neither change nor decay' (35-45).

CHAPTER XXX

THE MISERIES OF THE WORLDLING

The sage Kapila went on : 'Men do not realize the tremendous power of time, buffeted though they are by its violence, even as the massed clouds do not know the power of the wind. Whatever a man earns with infinite toil in the hope of enjoying it, that all-powerful time destroys, causing him grief. For the deluded fool had looked upon house, land, wealth and the like, the possessions of the perishable body, and of those that were related to him through it, as everlasting. The *jīva* finds all satisfaction in the body, whatever it might be, with which he is born ; he feels no disgust with life. Even if a man find himself in hell, he will not willingly quit the body which he has there, because, deluded by the Māyā of the Lord, he is supremely happy, enjoying

the delights that hell offers. With love for the body, for wife, son, house, cattle, wealth and kin deeply rooted in the heart, he looks upon himself as exceedingly blest. Harrowed by perpetual anxiety in looking after them, the fool sins endlessly in his wickedness. His mind and senses ravished by the wiles of women, who might be harlots, exerting their charms over him in secret, and the artless prattle of children, the man who is immersed in family cares labours tirelessly, discharging the *dharma*s of the householder in a manner which involves much dishonesty. That life brings mostly unhappiness; while all his efforts are directed towards avoidance of suffering, he thinks he is happy. With wealth and goods earned from all quarters by the employment of violence, he pampers those for supporting whom he will go to hell, while he himself lives on their leavings (1-10).

‘When his business declines, and repeated attempts to revive it fail, he in his helplessness casts covetous eyes on others’ wealth. Dogged by his evil luck, all his efforts are futile. Unable to support his family, his destitution makes him miserable; care-worn and bewildered, he heaves great sighs. When he is no longer able to maintain them, his wife and other dependants show little of their former regard for him, like niggardly husbandmen, who cease to care for the bullocks that are too old for work (11-13).

‘Even then disillusionment does not come upon him. He sticks to the home, depending on the support of those whom he had supported, eating like a cur the food that they contemptuously throw him, and hovering on the brink of death, his features ravaged by age. His digestion ruined by ill-health, he eats little and is hardly able to move his limbs. His eyes bulging from the effort to breathe, his wind-pipe blocked by phlegm, he is exhausted by cough and hard breathing, and the death-rattle is in his throat. Surrounded by his grieving relations, he does not reply when spoken to, caught in the noose of death. Rendered unconscious by his terrible suffering, he who had never controlled his senses, who had given all his life to the support of his family, dies as his relations weep (14-18).

‘ Looking at the two frightful messengers of death, who arrive at that moment and fix him with their baleful eyes, he is terrified and voids stools and urine. Confining him in the special body in which the torments of hell are undergone, they put a noose round his neck and drag him along the long way he has to go, as the King’s men take the offender. His heart riven by their intimidations and threats, he goes on his way, trembling in every limb, while hounds are let loose to feed on him, and his mind is anguished as he recalls his sins. Overwhelmed by hunger and thirst, scorched by sun and forest fire and angry winds on the track of burning sand, beaten with leathern thongs on the back, he moves slowly and with difficulty because of his weakness, along that road where there is neither shelter nor water. Stumbling and falling at every step, fainting from exhaustion and then getting up again, he is led along that dolorous way, plunged in darkness, to Yama’s abode. In three *muhūrtas*, or even in two, he is made to traverse the entire distance of ninety-nine thousand *yojanas*. And forthwith begin his torments—the burning of his limbs, by piling up flaming faggots all about him; consuming his own flesh, carved by himself or cut by others; having his entrails torn out, while life is still in him, by dogs and vultures in Yama’s domain; the agonizing bite of snakes, scorpions, gnats and such like; suffering the hacking of his limbs one by one, or their breaking by elephants; being hurled down headlong from the tops of mountain peaks; being plunged in water, or buried in pits. Men and women alike undergo the torments of the hells Tāmisra and Andha-tāmisra, Raurava and others, which they have brought upon themselves by sinful mutual attachment (19-28).

‘ Wise men say, O mother, that heaven and hell are to be found here and now, for here one may see creatures suffering the torments of hell. The man who has thus supported a family, or pampered his own body, leaves both here and dies, only to reap such fruits as I have described. Leaving here that body which he had nourished by inflicting injuries upon other creatures, he goes all alone, carrying his sin with him for sole

refreshments on the way. In hell he reaps the fruits, dispensed by Providence, of the sins he had committed in supporting his family, and grieves like one who has been robbed of his substance. The man who has all his life been intent on supporting his family by totally unrighteous means, goes to Andha-tāmisra, the lowest of hells. Having regularly undergone all the sufferings he must pass through, before he can take a human birth, he is purged of his sins, and is then born again as a man here on earth' (29-34).

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TRAVAILS IN THE WOMB

The Lord continued: 'As the result of his past *karmas* activated by the Lord, the *jīva* enters a woman's womb in order to take a body, making a drop of semen of a man his vehicle. In one day that drop of semen gets mixed with (the woman's) blood; in five days it becomes a blob; in ten days, it hardens and swells to the size of a jujube fruit; and later it becomes a ball of flesh, or an egg. In a month, the head is formed; in two months, the arms, the feet and other limbs are developed. In three months nails, hair, bones and skin grow, as well as the organs of generation and the orifices. In four months, the seven constituents, flesh and the rest, are developed, and in five hunger and thirst begin to be felt. In six months he is enveloped in the amnion and moves and turns in the right half of the uterus. While the flesh and other constituents of the body grow, nourished by the food and drink his mother takes, the creature lies in that unpleasant pit of dung and urine from which all creatures emerge into this world. Continually bitten by the hungry worms there, because the body is so tender, he suffers such agonies that he often falls into a swoon. Afflicted by the intolerable impact of the bitter, acrid, hot, salt, astringent and sour food his mother has eaten, suffering agonies in every limb, he lies bundled up in the membranes and covered by the entrails (of the mother), his head touching the belly,

his back and neck bent. Unable, like the bird in the nest, to move his limbs, he remembers, by the Grace of Providence, the accumulated *karmas* of a hundred births, but stifling from breathlessness, what comfort can he possibly find? Though endowed with consciousness from the seventh month onward, he cannot stay in one place, being buffeted by the winds that cause delivery, like the worm in excreta, his brother in the womb (1-10).

‘Suffering, and terrified, he, who¹ realizes the truth about the body and the soul, bound as he is to the body by the seven bonds, prays for succour to Him Who has placed him in the womb, praising Him with folded hands, in a faltering voice. This is what the creature says: “I seek the sanctuary, whence fear flees, of those lotus feet that walk² the earth, of Him Who takes of His own free will many a body to protect the world that throws itself on His mercy, and Who has allotted me this part, which is what I, unworthy, deserve. I, who lie here clinging to an illusion, the body made up of the elements, the senses and the mind, as though my essential nature was obscured and I was held in bondage by my *karmas*, make my salutations to Him Who is here with me, established in my anguished heart, immutable, unconditioned and untrammelled in His vision. Hidden by the illusory veil, the body made up of the five elements, though in reality I have nothing to do with it—and thus appearing to consist of the senses, the *guṇas* and the objects thereof, and the simulacrum of intelligence (the reflection of the spirit)—I make my obeisance to Him Whose glory is not obscured by the body, to the Omniscient Lord, the Ruler of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. By what means other than the Grace of the Supreme Lord can the *jīva* who, oblivious of his own Self, thanks to the Lord’s *Māyā*, has been wandering in the maze of *samsāra*, and suffering endless torments caused by the bondage of numberless *karmas* imposed by the *guṇas*, regain possession of that Self? Who but He, the Supreme Lord, Who is present with a fraction of Himself in all things stationary

¹ The text says ‘the rishi’. ² This obliquely refers to Krishna, the central figure of the *Bhāgavatam*.

and moving, as the Inner Ruler, could have given me this knowledge of past, present and future? So we, who are launched on the path of *karma*, which is the lot of the *jīva*, shall worship Him in order to be freed from the three kinds of suffering (11-16).

‘This creature, fallen into the pit of blood, excreta and urine, which is located in another’s body, and scorched by the heat of that belly, yearns in his misery to get out, and is counting the months. When, O Lord, shall he be thrown out? May He Who succours the lowly—and Who else could it be but Thee, incomparable in Thy infinite compassion?—and has imparted to me, barely in my tenth month, this unique knowledge, find His reward, O Lord, in the satisfaction of having done what He has done for me; for who can requite Him, or do more than join his palms in thanksgiving to Him? Creatures other than man are aware only of pleasure and pain in their bodies; while I, who came to possess, by virtue of the discriminating knowledge He has vouchsafed me, a body which was capable of being disciplined by self-control, see Him, the Primordial and Infinite Lord, directly within and without me, as plainly as I see myself, the self-conscious experiencer of pleasure and pain. Though I suffer greatly where I am, I do not wish to get out of the womb, to fall into the blind well outside, O all-powerful Lord; since the moment I get there I shall be overtaken by the Lord’s *Māyā*, followed by the delusion that the body is the Self, and caught up again in the transmigratory cycle. I shall remain here, untroubled at heart, and redeem myself quickly, with the friendly aid of the discriminating intellect, from the darkness (*samsāra*), by lodging in my heart the feet of the Lord Vishnu, so that I may not be overtaken again by the manifold misery (of the transmigratory existence)’ (17-21).

Kapila said: ‘While the ten-month-old creature in the womb, having thus made up his mind in the light of knowledge, remains in this posture of prayer and praise, he is suddenly dislodged from his place and sped down towards birth by the wind that causes birth. Precipitated by it, he emerges with great difficulty, head downwards, breathless, suffering intensely, all

memory of his former state blotted out. Falling on the ground fouled by blood and urine, he writhes like the worm in excreta and wails aloud, because knowledge has departed and the contrary possesses him. Brought up by those who do not know what he wants, he is unable to refuse what they give him, though he does not want it. Laid down on a soiled bed swarming with creatures bred in sweat, he cannot scratch himself, or sit up, stand or move about. Gnats, mosquitoes and bed-bugs bite his tender skin, as worms bite smaller worms, while he, having lost the illumination he had, cries helplessly (22-27).

‘His childhood is passed in this way, and then boyhood, which is no less unhappy. His youth is full of misery, because he cannot attain his object, and in his ignorance he is filled with anger. From the self-love which grows with the growing body, the man who thirsts for sensual pleasure invites disaster by quarrelling with others who are equally bent upon pleasure. The stupid man, ignorant of his true nature, looks with the notions of “me” and “mine” on the body, the work of the five elements, and clings to what is unreal. For the sake of the body, which is wrought by *karma*, the produce of nescience, and which sticks to him, causing perpetual misery, he does actions which bind him and launch him on *samsāra*. If he falls in with evil men whose sole aim is to satisfy the cravings of sex and hunger, and influenced by them delights in following in their footsteps, he falls into hell again as before. One should not associate with those men by commerce with whom truthfulness, purity, compassion, temperance in speech, the power of discrimination, opulence, modesty, reputation, forbearance, the control of the senses and of the mind, and good fortune are all forfeited. Such men, who look upon the body as the Self and stupidly hanker after pleasure, are ever restless. Deplorable is the fate of those evil men, the pet monkeys of women. From no other association does a man fall into such delusion and bondage as from keeping company with women, or with men who run after them. The Great Progenitor (Brahmā) was so overwhelmed by the beauty of his daughter, when he saw

her, that he shamelessly pursued her as she fled, taking the form of a hind, himself disguised as a stag. Who, of all the progeny of those begotten by his children's children, with the sole exception of the sage Narayana, is free from the domination of that Māyā which takes the form of woman? Look at the overpowering strength of My Māyā manifest as woman; by the mere twitching of an eyebrow she enslaves the conquerors of the four quarters. He who has acquired Self-knowledge by service to Me, and would rise up to the supreme heights of yoga, should never allow himself to be beguiled into attachment to women, who are described as the gateway to hell by yogis. He must regard as a death-trap, like a well hidden by grass, the Māyā fashioned by God in the shape of woman, who gradually gets him under her thumb. The *jīva*, who from his addiction to women in a former life has taken birth as a woman now, is deluded into mistaking My Māyā masquerading as a man for the husband who brings wealth, children and a home. He should realize that it is death in the form of husband, children, home, and so on, that the gods have devised for him, as the fowler employs his song (28-42).

'The *jīva*, transmigrating by means of the subtle body, experiences the fruits of past *karma*, and does *karmas* incessantly. The subtle body is the invariable concomitant of the transmigrating *jīva*. The physical body, the complex of gross elements, organs and mind, is the vehicle of experience (which the *jīva* takes in every birth). When these bodies become unfit to discharge their functions, that state is called death. Their emergence (into the field of activity) is called birth. (This may be made clear by an analogy). When the eyeball loses the ability to see, the faculty of sight fails; when both of these fail, the *jīva* loses the power to see. [*When the physical body, which perceives objects, becomes incapable of doing this, that state is called death. When the *jīva* looks upon the physical body with the egoistic notion, "This is me," that is called birth.] Therefore

* This verse, found in some MSS., inserted between the first and second halves of the previous verse, is commented upon by S. The translation follows him.

the man of resolution should go through life setting aside fear, dejection and anxiety, and without attachments of any sort, since he knows the true status of the Self. Realizing this by the exercise of intelligence, strengthened by the practice of yoga and distaste for worldly pleasures, he should relegate the body, made up of the elements of Prakṛti, to the world of illusions where it belongs, and live care-free' (43-48).

CHAPTER XXXII

LIBERATION BY PURE DEVOTION

Kapila continued: 'He who lives the householder's life and practises the *dharma*s congruent with it, attains the enjoyments and the wealth that are the fruit thereof and continues practising those *dharma*s. He too¹ becomes averse to the *dharma* that leads to the Lord, since his mind is dominated by pleasure. With great zeal he propitiates the gods with sacrifices, and likewise the manes, being vowed to their service because of his infinite faith in them. Going to the world of the moon-god, he quaffs nectar there and (in due course) is reborn on earth. When the Lord Hari, for Whom Ananta serves as a seat, lays Himself down on the body of the King of the serpents to rest, the worlds to which those who practise the householders' *dharma*s go, are destroyed (1-4).

'Those resolute men, however, who do not utilize the *dharma*s that are obligatory, for the satisfaction of desires or the gaining of wealth, who have cultivated non-attachment and dedicated all their works to the Lord and won peace and purity of mind, who are intent on the practice of the *dharma*s that lead to withdrawal from life, and are devoid of the notions of "me" and "mine"—these men, their hearts cleansed by the un-mixed good that results from the disinterested practice of their own Dharma, attain through the route of the sun the Supreme Lord Whose face is turned everywhere, Who is the Substance of the universe and the

¹ Like the man who follows sinful practices, spoken of in the previous Chapter.

Cause of its creation and destruction. Those, too, who meditate upon Hiraṇyagarbha, identifying him with the Supreme Lord, live in his world till the merging of Brahmā in the Lord, which occurs at the end of the two halves of his life. When the Self-created (Brahmā), who identifies himself with the three *guṇas*, and who is greater than all the gods, wishes to destroy the cosmic egg along with (the gross elements) earth, water, fire, air and space, as well as the mind, the organs, the objects thereof and the ego, after having enjoyed them for the period of two *parārdhas*, he merges in the immutable Brahmā. The yogis who, having fared forth a long way, had reached the Lord Hiraṇyagarbha, but had not been able to shed the ego, now attain along with him (Brahmā), the Primordial Lord, the Supreme Brahmā That is Bliss, having succeeded in establishing control over the breath and the mind and attaining non-attachment. Worship Him, the Haven of Refuge, O mother, with all love, Him of Whose glory you have heard me tell, Who dwells in the heart-lotus of all beings. Because he has not shed the sense of difference, and has an egoistic attitude towards his work, though he does it in a spirit of disinterestedness, even the Creator of all beings, stationary and moving, the repository of the Veda, is reborn after having enjoyed his paramountcy over the creators and been merged, as aforesaid, in the Saṁgha Brahmā, the first (incarnation) Puruṣa, Who is Puruṣottama Himself. He is reborn when in due course the equilibrium of the *guṇas* is disturbed again by time, the incarnate form of the Lord, and he begins his work of creation as before. The great *rishis*, the Kumāras and lords of yoga, who had been merged with him in the Cosmic Puruṣa, after having enjoyed the sovereign opulence earned by their *karmas*, are reborn with him, when the disturbance of the *guṇas* occurs (5-15).

‘But those men who are attached to works and who faithfully perform all *karmas*, those that are not forbidden as well as those that are obligatory, are restless in mind, avid for pleasure, powerless against the promptings of the senses. Absorbed in the concerns of the domestic life, they offer daily worship to the manes.

Those who are thus devoted to the three ends of life, but averse to listening to the glories of the Foe of Madhu, Who destroys *samsāra* and Whose mighty exploits are supremely worth telling; and those unfortunates who are surely undone by their own past *karma* because they pass by that nectar, the story of the doings of Achyuta, in their eagerness to hear wicked and degrading tales, as pigs eat excreta—all these, having devoted themselves to the performance of the *karmas* prescribed for observance from the cradle to the grave, go by the southern route of Aryamā to the world of the manes, and in due course are born again through their progeny. When the fruits of their good works are exhausted, they are deprived by the gods of their means of enjoyment, and they fall helplessly, hurled headlong, into this world (16-21).

‘Therefore, devote yourself to the worship of the Supreme Lord Whose lotus feet are meet for worship, with the abounding love which the devotion inspired by the contemplation of His glorious qualities brings. Steadfast devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva quickly produces distaste for the things of this world, and that certain knowledge which brings the realization of the Brahman. The moment his mind ceases to discriminate, by reason of the activities of the senses, between objects which are not intrinsically different, looking upon some as pleasant, on others as not, that moment he sees with his mind his own Self, equable and self-luminous, free from likes and dislikes, and completely aloof, serenely established in the intuition of pure Bliss. The pure Consciousness is spoken of variously as the Para Brahman, Paramātmā, Īśvara or Puruṣa. The Lord, the One without a second, appears as the multiplicity of seer, seen, and so on. The one end of all yoga practised perfectly with all its ancillary disciplines, is the attainment by the yogi of complete detachment from the world. The one Consciousness, the Brahman unqualified, appears as the world of objects characterized by properties such as sound, by reason of the delusion caused by the outward-ranging senses. Thus It is manifest as the Mahat, the threefold ego, the five gross elements and the eleven organs, and also

as the *jīva*, whose body is the cosmic egg from which emerges the universe. The man who has steadied his mind in concentration by constant practice of yoga with implicit faith and love for the Lord and distaste for all else, and thus achieved detachment, sees this Brahmā everywhere. I have now imparted to you, revered mother, the knowledge by means of which the truth about Puruṣa and Prakṛti may be known and the Brahmā realized. The common goal of both the *jñāna*-yoga that aims at realizing the unqualified Brahmā, and the yoga of devotion, which aims at attaining Me, is That which is denoted by the term Bhagavān. Just as a substance, which has many qualities, is apprehended differently by different faculties through their different modes, so the one Lord is realized by various approaches taught by the Sāstras. By doing charitable works of public utility, offering sacrifices, making liberal gifts, practising austerities, learning the Veda and studying its teaching, controlling the mind and the senses, renouncing *karmas*, practising yoga with all the ancillary disciplines, cultivating sustained devotion, observing the Dharma of both kinds—that which, from desire for the fruit, leads to activity, and that which leads to withdrawal—realizing the truth of the Self, and cultivating resolute detachment—by all these various means the Self-luminous Lord, Who has all adorable qualities and Who is untrammelled by attributes, may be attained (22-36).

‘I have already told you of the four kinds of Bhakti-yoga, and of the nature of time, with its imperceptible movement, which enters into all creatures and hustles them towards their doom, and also, my mother, of the many births taken by the *jīva*, as the consequence of *karmas* prompted by nescience, and of his ignorance of his own Self when he is entangled in them. This teaching should never be imparted to any man who is a thorn in the side of others ; who is immodest or conceited ; who is given to evil ways ; who is a hypocrite or a sensualist ; who is infatuated with house and home ; or who is not My devotee. It should never be given to those who hate My devotees. It may be taught to him who has faith and devotion, who is modest, unjealous, kind to

all beings, and zealous in the service of the Guru, who is indifferent to pleasure, serene, uncavilling and pure, who holds Me dearer than the dearest. Even the man, who, giving his heart wholly to Me, hears this discourse but once with faith, or himself recounts it to others, shall without a doubt attain Me, my mother' (37-42).

CHAPTER XXXIII

DEVAHŪTI'S EMANCIPATION

Maitreya said: Having heard Kapila's discourse, Devahūti, the beloved spouse of Kardama, had the veil of delusion torn from her eyes. Making her obeisance to him, she praised him, the propagator of the Sāṅkhya Sāstra, which deals with the fundamental principles. Devahūti said: 'Even the Self-existent (Brahmā), who was born in the lotus of Thy navel, could only contemplate in his mind the manifest body of Thine which lay on the waters and was the cause of the phenomenal universe, brought about by the perpetual flux of the *guṇas* in it, and which was made up of the elements, the sense-organs, the objects thereof, and the mind. And Thou dost effect the creation etcetera of the universe by Thy power channelled through the streaming *guṇas*; doing that, for the sake of the *jīvas* as their Ruler. For while Thou art a non-doer, Thy will is indefeasible, and Thou commandest myriads of powers which baffle the understanding. How couldst Thou, O Lord, our Protector, come to be borne in my womb, Thou That didst contain the universe in Thy belly at the time of the Dissolution as a babe to all outward seeming, lying all alone on a banyan leaf, sucking Thy toe! Thou takest a body of Thy own free will for the destruction of the wicked, and for promoting the welfare of those who obey Thy will, O all-powerful Lord. Even as Thou wert incarnate as the boar, and so on, Thou hast taken this body for revealing the way of knowledge of the Self. What cannot one gain by sight of Thee, O Lord, when even the eater of dog's flesh becomes fit to offer the Soma sacrifice by reason of hearing Thy name

casually spoken, or himself uttering it, or by making his obeisance to Thee, or just remembering Thee? Ah! how marvellous that the eater of dog's flesh, whose tongue is ever engaged in uttering Thy name, should, for that reason, be counted higher than all others. Those who extol Thee must have (in past lives) offered oblations in the fire, bathed in holy streams, led virtuous lives and learnt the Vedas. I make my prostrations to Thee, Lord Kapila, That art spoken of as the Brahmā, Purusha and Vishnu, containing the Veda in Thyself, That art meet for contemplation by the mind turned inward, and hast destroyed the transmigratory flux by Thy essential Glory' (1-8).

Maitreya said: Thus praised, the Supreme Lord known as Kapilā, who loved His mother, answered her in a voice that carried sublime assurance. Kapila said, 'By following this method I have taught, which you can easily do, my mother, you shall shortly achieve the supreme goal. Put your faith in this teaching of mine, which the teachers of the way of Brahmā-knowledge followed; by means of it you shall attain me who know no birth. Those who do not know that teaching perish' (9-11).

Maitreya said: Having shown the good dame the easy way of Self-realization, and taken leave of her who had obtained knowledge of the Brahmā, the Lord Kapila went his way. And she, controlling her mind by the instruction in yoga her son had given, remained practising yoga in that hermitage, which was like a chaplet of flowers on the crown of the Sarasvati, and attained peace. Her curly locks turned tawny and matted by her frequent baths, and her body, clad in tree-bark, became lean by reason of her severe austerities. She renounced the peerless felicities of her home, enriched by the austerities and *yogic* powers of the Patriarch Kardama, which even those who lived in aerial mansions might have coveted. In that home were beds white and soft like the froth on milk, bedsteads of ivory with gold fittings, and golden divans with luxuriously padded seats. Its walls of bright crystal, with emerald panels, reflected the images of jewelled lamps carried by jewels among women. Its garden

was delightful with its multitude of celestial trees in flower, the fluting of mating birds and the hum of drunken bees. When she entered the pool in the garden, which smelt of lilies, along with Kardama, who lavished his love on her, the celestial attendants of the gods used to sing her praises (12-19).

While the good dame relinquished without a sigh all this, which even Indra's spouses might have looked upon with longing, separation from her son cost her a pang, and her face mantled over with inexpressible grief. Her husband having gone away to the penitential woods, she felt the separation from her son the more keenly, like the cow that has lost her young, despite her knowledge of the Truth. Constantly meditating on her son, the divine Kapila, who was Hari Himself, she soon ceased to take any pleasure in that home, my child. With a mind purified by the knowledge which brings the realization of the Brahmā—knowledge which she had obtained from the combination of yoga, which released an exhaustless spring of devotion, with resolute distaste for the things of the world, and the judicious practice of the prescribed disciplines—she meditated on the form of the Lord with the gracious and smiling face, as her son had described it to her, concentrating on the entire form as well as on each limb; and she, likewise, meditated on her own soul as being infinite and all-pervasive, its limitations, due to the *guṇas* of Māyā, having vanished as it shone forth in its essential truth. And thus she came to anchor her mind securely in the Brahmā, the exalted Lord Who is the stay and support of all souls. When her sorrows had thus been dispelled by the cessation of the notion of *jīva*-hood, she found supreme contentment (20-26).

Being established in a permanent state of *samādhi*, she was freed from the delusion caused by the *guṇas*, and she forgot her body, like the dreamer who, when he is awaked from sleep, forgets the body that he had regarded as his own in his dream. That body, nourished by others, did not become thin, because there was no mental worry. Though covered with dirt, it shone like a smoking fire. Her mind totally absorbed in Vāsudeva, she did not recollect her own body, which

had been transformed by austerities and yoga. She was not aware of her dishevelled hair or of the fact that she had no clothes on. That body was being kept alive by what remained of the fruits of past *karma*. By thus following the way that Kapila had taught, she realized the Self That is ever free, That Self which is the Paramātmā, Brāhmā and Bhagavān (27-30).

That place where she attained liberation, O valiant one, was known as Siddhi-pada and became famous in the three worlds as a place of pilgrimage. And her body, freed from the impurities of the flesh by yoga, became a great stream, my friend, which brought fulfilment to aspirants and became the resort of the Siddhas (31-32).

The master-yogi, the Lord Kapila, had gone to the North-east from his father's hermitage, after taking leave of his mother. Extolled by Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Gandharvas, the sages and the bands of Apsarases, and received with all honour by the Lord of the ocean and assigned a place of residence by him, he has settled down there with a tranquil mind in the practice of yoga for the welfare of the three worlds, and is extolled by the great teachers of Sāṅkhya (33-35).

And now, I have told you, my son, what you, O blameless one, wanted to hear about the elevating dialogue between Kapila and Devahūti. He who teaches or learns this teaching of the sage Kapila, which should be guarded as a mystery and which shows the way of realization of the *Ātman*, will give his mind wholly to the exalted Lord Who flies the Garuda flag, and will reach His lotus feet.

(Here ends the *Third Book of Srimad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

THE DESCENDANTS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Maitreya said : To Manu were born of Satarūpa three daughters of renown, Ākūti, Devahūti and Prasūti. The King gave away Ākūti in marriage to Ruchi with the consent of Satarūpā, stipulating that she should give him her son in adoption though she had brothers. The blessed Ruchi, the Patriarch, who was endowed with Brāhmic lustre, begot on her twins, a male and a female, propitiating the Lord by intense meditation. The male was none other than Vishnu, incarnate as Yajna, and the female was Dakshinā, a fraction of Lakshmi, who is inseparable from Him. The son of Swayambhū joyfully brought home his daughter's son, who achieved widespread glory ; while Ruchi kept Dakshinā with him. The exalted Lord Who is invoked by the Yajur-vedic incantations, Yajna, married her who desired to wed Him. Loving her as she loved him, he begot twelve sons on her. The twelve were : Tosha, Pratosha, Santosha, Bhadra, Sānti, Idaspati, Idhma, Kavi, Vibhu, Svahna, Sudeva, and Rochana. These were the gods, collectively known as Tushitas, of the Swāyambhuva Manvantara ; in that Manvantara the (seven) *rishis* were Marīchi and the rest, and Yajna was both¹ the incarnation of Hari, and the Indra who ruled over the gods (1-8).

Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, who were possessed of great might, were the sons of Manu. In that Manvantara the world was ruled by their sons, grandsons

¹ Every Manu's reign has, apart from the Manu himself, five authorities—his sons, a group of gods, a set of seven sages, a ruler of the gods and an incarnation of Vishnu. Here the Indra and the incarnation were one and the same.

and great-grandsons and their descendants. Manu gave away his daughter Devahūti in marriage to Kardama, my son. You have already heard from me a good deal of what there is to be said about that family. The Lord Manu married off his daughter Prasūti to Daksha, the son of Brahmā ; his prolific progeny spread all over the three worlds (9-12).

And now I will tell you of the descendants of Kardama's nine daughters, whom I have mentioned as having wedded the Brahmarshis. Kardama's daughter Kalā, wife of Marichi, gave birth to Kaśyapa and Pūrṇimā whose descendants filled the worlds. Pūrṇimā begot Viraja and Viśvaga, O scorcher of the foe, and (a daughter) Devakulyā, who became the celestial stream (Gangā) by virtue of washing the feet of Hari. Atri's wife Anasūyā gave birth to three sons, Datta, Durvāsas and Soma (the moon-god), who were partial incarnations of Vishnu, Siva and Brahmā respectively (12-15).

Vidura asked, ' With what object did the great Gods, the Protector, the Creator and the Destroyer of the worlds, take birth in Atri's house ? Be pleased to tell me, my master ' (16).

Maitreya answered : Directed by Brahmā to propagate progeny, Atri, foremost among the knowers of the Veda, went to the Kulaparvata Rksha with his wife and there engaged in austerities. In a forest of *palāśa* and *aśoka* trees, loaded with bunches of bloom, and resounding everywhere with the noise of the cascades of the river Nirvindhya, the sage established mastery over the mind by breath-control, and stood on one leg for a hundred years, subsisting on air, unmindful of heat and cold and other pairs of opposites, absorbed in this intent prayer : ' I make my submission to Him Who is the sole Lord of the worlds ; may He bless me with offspring who would be comparable to Him ! ' Seeing the three worlds scorched by the fire which issued from his head and broke into a blaze, fed by the power of his self-control, the three supreme Lords of the world went to his hermitage, attended by Apsarases, sages, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Uragas, singing their glory. His mind suddenly lit up as by a flash when they appeared before him together, the sage, still standing on one leg, (opened

his eyes and) saw the great gods. He threw himself down on the ground like a stick before them in prostration, and then with offerings in his joined hands, worshipped them, who were seated on the bull, the swan and Suparṇa (Garuda), and carried their distinctive marks. As they showed their graciousness by the loving look on their smiling faces, the sage, whose eyes shut of themselves, dazzled by their splendour, praised them, who were greater than the greatest in all the worlds, with clasped hands and a heart that clung to them, in words that were at once sweet and sublime (17-26).

Atri said : ' You are Brahmā, Vishnu and Girīśa, Who in *kalpa* after *kalpa* assume distinct bodies fashioned by the *guṇas* of Māyā, which are differentiated for the work of creating, preserving and destroying the worlds. I make my humble prostrations to you. Be pleased to tell me this : which one of you did I call on ? It was on the one Supreme God, the foremost of the gods, that I meditated, from the desire for progeny. How comes it that (all of) you, who are beyond the reach of even the minds of men, have come here ? Be pleased to enlighten me, my wonder knows no bounds ' (27-28).

Maitreya said : When the sage said this, the three Gods laughed and answered him in pleasing words, O capable one. ' What you purpose to yourself has to come to pass, because, your purpose being good, your will is indefeasible, O Brahman. We are That (Supreme Ruler of the worlds) Which you meditated upon. Therefore there will be born to you sons who are partial incarnations of us three, and who will be world-renowned, O good one. They will spread your fame everywhere. May all good attend you ! ' Having thus granted their wish and received the worship of that couple, they disappeared before their eyes. To them, Soma was born with a fraction of the power of Brahmā, the yogi Datta, of Vishnu, and Durvāsas of Sankara (29-33).

And now hear me tell of the descendants of Angiras. Śraddhā, Angiras's wife, gave birth to four daughters, Sinivālī, Kuhū, Rākā and Anumati, who was the fourth. He had two other children, sons who were famed in the Svārochisha Manvantara, Utathya and the blessed Bṛhaspati, foremost of the knowers of the Brahmā.

Pulasthya begot on his wife Havirbhū, Agastya who, in another birth, was the fire in the bowels, and Viśravas, the man of great austerity. To the latter was born of Idavidā the god Kubera, who is the Ruler of the Yakshas. To Viśravas were born, of another wife, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana. Gati, the chaste wife of Pulaha, gave birth to three sons, Karmaśreshta, Variyān and Sahishnu, O sagacious one. Kratu's wife Kriyā bore him the Vālakhilyas, sixty thousand *rishis*, who shone with Brāhmic splendour. To Vasishtha was born of Ūrjā (Arundhati) seven children, who became Brahmarshis of unsullied character; of them Chitraketu was the first, O scorcher of the foe. These seven sages were Chitraketu, Surochis, Virajas, Mitra, Ulbana, Vasubhṛd-yāna and Dyumān. Among his other sons (born of another wife) was Sakti. Chitti (Sānti) the wife of Atharvā¹ begot Dhṛtavrata, Dadyancha and Aśvaśiras (34-42).

And now listen to the account of Bhṛgu's progeny. The blessed Bhṛgu begot on his spouse Khyāti the sons Dhātā and Vidhātā, as well as Śrī, who was devoted to the exalted Lord. To them Meru gave away in marriage his daughters Āyati and Niyati. These spouses bore them the sons who were known as Mrkanda and Prāṇa. Mārkaṇdeya was the son of Mrkanda, and Vedaśiras was the son of Prāṇa. Kavi too was the son of Bhṛgu; his son was the omniscient Uśanas (Sukra). All these sages, O Kṣhattā, filled the worlds with their progeny. And now I have given you an account of the children of Kardama's daughters; whoever hears it with faith is instantly redeemed from sin (43-46).

Daksha, the son of Aja (Brahmā), married Prasūti, the daughter of Manu. On her he begot sixteen pure-eyed daughters. Thirteen of them the sagacious Daksha gave away in marriage to Dharma; one to the god of fire; one to the manes collectively, and one to Bhava, Who ends the *samsāric* travail for men. Dharma's wives² were Sraddhā, Maitrī, Dayā, Sānti, Tushti, Pushti, Kriyā, Unnati, Buddhi, Medhā, Titikshā, Hri

¹ He is also Brahmā's son, though not mentioned in the above list.

² Their names suggest that they are abstract virtues, like the Tushitas' and others mentioned in this Chapter.

and Mūrti. Sraddhā gave birth to Subham, Maitrī to Prasādam, Dayā to Abhayam, Sānti to Sukham, Tushti to Mudam, Kriyā to Yoga, Pushti to Smaya, Unnati to Darpa, Buddhi to Artha, Medhā to Smṛti, Titikshā to Sama, Hṛī, to a son, Praśraya, and Mūrti, the home of all virtues, to the twin sages Nara and Narayana (47-52).

When these sages (Nara and Narayana) were born, all the universe rejoiced, supremely happy. The minds of men and the four quarters were serene and propitious ; and so were the winds, the streams, and the mountains. The celestial trumpets sounded, and there fell showers of flowers ; the sages in their joy uttered panegyrics, the Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang. The celestial women danced, and there were festive rejoicings everywhere. Brahmā and the gods waited upon them, singing their praises. The gods said, ' Salutations to Him, the Supreme Lord, Who has this day appeared in the form of the sage in the house of Dharma in order to bring to the world the knowledge of the *Ātman* ; on Which the universe is manifested by His *Māyā*, as an illusory phenomenon is projected on the sky. May He, the truth of Whom may be known only from the *Sāstra*, cast His compassionate eye, which puts in the shade the holy lotus that is *Śrī*'s abode, on us, the company of the gods, who were created out of pure *sattva* to safeguard the world order against disruption.' The exalted Lords, thus extolled and worshipped by the hosts of the gods, bestowed a loving glance on them, and went to the Gandhamādana mountain, my son. Those two incarnations of Hari appeared on earth later as the two Krishnas, the foremost of the Yadus and of the Kurus, for the dissipation of the burden of the earth (53-59).

Svāhā gave birth to three sons of Agni, who control the three fires, Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Suchi, all of them consumers of oblations. To these were born the forty-five fire-gods ; along with their fathers and their grand-sire, they constituted forty-nine. It is in the name of these fires that men well-versed in Vedic *karmas* offer *ishtis* for the propitiation of the fire-god, when Vedic sacrifices are being offered (60-62).

The manes are the Agnishvāttas, the Barhishadas, the Saumyas, and the Ājyapas ; they include both those

for whom offerings are made in the fire and those for whom they are not made. Svadhā, the daughter of Daksha, was the wife of all of them. She bore them two daughters, Vayunā and Dhārīṇī. Both of them became teachers of the Brahmā, having attained knowledge and illumination. Bhava's spouse, Satī, though devoted to the God Bhava, bore Him no son worthy of her in qualities or disposition. When her father in his anger turned hostile to the blameless Bhava, she, who was very young, threw away her body by resorting to yoga (63-66).

CHAPTER II

DAKSHA'S HOSTILITY TO SIVA

Vidura asked: 'How did Daksha, who loved his daughter, come to hate Bhava, foremost of those who display the highest virtues, disregarding the feelings of his daughter Satī? How did the Patriarch come to hate Him, Who is the Teacher of all creatures, moving and stationary, and the Great God Whom all the worlds worship, Who is Peace incarnate, and Who delights wholly in the Self, and entertains no enmity against any one? Be pleased to tell me, O Brahman, how this hostility between father-in-law and son-in-law arose, resulting in Satī's throwing away her life—that life which it is so hard to give up' (1-3).

Maitreya replied: In days far past the Patriarchs convened a great sacrificial session at which were assembled the chief *rishis*, the many gods with their attendants, the sages, and the deities presiding over the fires. On seeing him (Daksha) enter, shining like the sun and lighting up the great assembly by his brilliance, the members of the assembly rose up from their seats along with the fires—all, that is, except Virinchi and Sarva—overpowered by his splendour. The exalted Daksha, duly honoured by the chiefs of the assembly, paid his respects to Aja, the father of the worlds, and took his seat, as he bade him. He felt insulted at not being shown due honour by Mr̥da (Siva) who had remained seated. With an oblique glance at Him, as if he would burn

Him with his eyes, he then addressed the assembly. 'May the Brahmarshis, the gods and the fires be pleased to listen, while I speak of the way in which good men conduct themselves. I speak neither from ignorance nor from spite. Here is one who by his shameless behaviour has brought disgrace on the Guardians of the worlds, and by his arrogant disregard for the Vedic way of life, violated the time-honoured proprieties observed by the good. He came to stand in the relation of a pupil to me when he took the hand of my daughter, the peer of Sāvitrī, before the Brahmanas and the fire, looking as if butter would not melt in his mouth. Having married my fawn-eyed daughter, he of the monkey eyes has not shown, even by verbal courtesies, the deference due to one whom he should welcome by going forth to meet him and prostrating himself before him. I gave my child, though with great reluctance, like one imparting the Veda to a Sūdra, to him who has discarded all rites, who is impure, and stuck up, who violates all norms. Surrounded by the spirits of the dead and the hosts of the elementals, he wanders in horrid cremation grounds, naked, with dishevelled hair, laughing and weeping like a madman. Bathed in the ashes of funeral pyres, adorning himself with the wreaths placed on corpses, and men's bones, he, Siva only in name, is anything but auspicious; he is drunk, and dear to drunkards, and the master of the Pramathas and the elementals, whose nature is purely *tāmasic*. To him, the lord of the *Unmādas*, who had lost all purity, whose heart was evil, I gave, alas, my gentle daughter at the instance of the supreme Creator' (4-16).

Maitreya went on: Having thus reviled Girīśa, Who did not say a word against him but sat quietly, the angry Daksha performed *āchamana* and then pronounced a curse. 'This Bhava, being the vilest of the gods, shall not get his share of the offerings in the sacrifices to the gods, along with Indra, Upendra and other gods.' Having thus uttered in blazing anger a curse against Giritra, in spite of the attempts of the chiefs of the assembly to dissuade him, Daksha left the place and went home, O scion of the Kurus. On coming to know of the curse, Nandīśvara, foremost of the atten-

dants of Girīśa, his eyes red with wrath, pronounced a terrible curse against Dakṣha and the Brahmanas who had countenanced his censorious words. 'This ignorant mortal who, prizing the body, and labouring under the sense of difference, hates the exalted Lord, Who does not react in the same spirit, shall turn his face away from the Supreme Truth. Addicted to the domestic life, which often involves dishonesty, from the hankering after vulgar pleasures, he constantly engages in the practice of rites, misled by the eulogistic statements in the Vedas. This Dakṣha, being animal-like in his forgetfulness of the truth of the Self, caused by confounding the body with the Self, shall be inordinately fond of women, and he shall ere long get the head of a goat : he is stupid enough to think that the ignorance which is the cause of his obsession with *karma* is knowledge. Those who sided with him when he insulted Sarva, shall be caught up in the travail of *samsāra*. Those who hate Hara shall be utterly confounded, their hearts smitten with the heady perfume from the flowery promises in the Veda. These Brahmanas, eating anything and everything, devoting themselves to learning, austerities and vows only to earn a living, and delighting in wealth, in the body and the senses, shall lead a beggar's life' (17-26).

Hearing him thus curse the Brahmana community, Bhṛgu retaliated with a curse—that weapon of the Brahmana which there is no resisting. 'Those who take vows, dedicating themselves to the cult of Bhava, and those who follow them, shall become heretics, inimical to the holy scriptures. Devoid of purity, their minds bemused, they shall wear their hair matted, cover their bodies with ash, adorn themselves with bones, and dedicate themselves to the worship of Siva, in which strong liquor is paid divine honours. By vilifying the Brahmanas, and the Veda, the safeguard of the norms of Dharma and the support of all men, you have fallen into heresy. This ancient teaching is the only safe guide to mankind, since the sages and saints have followed it, and it comes from Janārdana. For having heaped obloquy on the teaching of the supreme and pure Veda, the primordial wisdom to which good men have cleaved,

you shall be confirmed in that heresy which looks upon the Ruler of *tāmasic* creatures as God' (27-32).

Maitreya said, 'As Bhṛgu uttered this curse, the exalted Lord Bhava left the place along with His followers, as though He felt rather unhappy. The Patriarchs completed in a thousand years without a flaw the Sattrā sacrifice in which worship is offered to Hari, the foremost of the gods, and took their lustral bath, O prince of archers, at the confluence of the Gangā and the Yamunā, and thus freed from sin, departed to their own abodes (33-35).

CHAPTER III

SATI WISHES TO GO TO HER FATHER'S SACRIFICE

Maitreya said: A very long time passed, with the father-in-law and the son-in-law remaining in a state of inveterate hostility. When Brahmā, the supreme Creator, crowned Daksha as Chief of all the Patriarchs, he became inordinately proud. He offered the Vājapeya sacrifice, and contemptuously ignoring the great who are established in the Brahmā, began the Brhaspati-sava, one of the greatest of sacrifices. At that rite were present all the Brahmarshis, the celestial sages, the gods and the manes with their spouses, all of them suitably adorned and honoured. The goddess Satī, daughter of Daksha, came to know of the great festivities in connection with her father's sacrifice from the talk of celestials in the sky. And she saw, as they passed close by her home, the aerial cars that came from all directions, in which rode the demigods' beautiful spouses with the flitting eyes, superbly dressed and wearing gold necklaces and burnished ear-pendants, with their husbands seated by their side. Excited by the news, she spoke to her Lord, the Great God, Who rules all creatures (1-7).

Satī said: 'Have you not heard that the great festivities in connection with the sacrifice your father-in-law, the Patriarch, is offering, have started? Let

us also go there, O Vāmadeva, if you so wish ; for these gods are all going there. To that great festival my sisters will be assuredly coming with their husbands, desiring to meet friends and relations ; and I too would like to go there with you, to receive the presents that will be given. There I shall see those whom I have been longing to see—my sisters with their worthy husbands, my mother's sisters and my mother, her heart drenched with love for me. And we can also see the great sages hoist the sacrificial flag, O Mrda. This eternal marvel, the universe, the product of the *guṇas*, is manifested in Thyself by Thy own power of *Māyā*, O Lord That knowest no birth. But I am only a poor woman, too ignorant to understand Thee, and I long to see the home of my birth, O Bhava. Look, O Lord that knowest not the travails of *samsāra*, at all those other women going there in such large numbers, beautifully dressed and accompanied by their husbands ; their aerial cars, white as swans, adorn the sky, O Śitikantha. How can a daughter hear of festive celebrations in her father's home without every nerve in her body tingling to be there, O first of the gods ? People go even uninvited to the husband's house, the Guru's or the father's, or to the houses of friends. Therefore, O immortal Lord, be pleased to do my wish, Thou art the soul of mercy. Limitless as Thy wisdom is, Thou holdest me in one half of Thy body ; pray grant me my request' (8-14).

The sage said : When He was thus begged by His beloved, Giritra, Who loves the right-minded, replied with a laugh as He recalled the foul words that bit like arrows into the vitals, which the Patriarch had uttered in the presence of the other Patriarchs. The Lord told her, 'It would be quite proper, as you said, you lovely creature, for one to visit one's relations, even without being invited, if these in their arrogant egotism and touchiness were not disposed to quarrel with one over imaginary faults. When the sense of discrimination has been destroyed by the six great possessions—learning, austerities, wealth, beauty, youth and high birth—which, while they augment the virtues of good men, become vices in the wicked by pampering their pride, these latter are so blinded by their arrogance

that they cannot see the glory of the supremely great. One should not go to the houses of such men, looking upon them as relations, because they in their fickleness regard friendly visitors with suspicion and guile, with raised eyebrows and frowning looks. The man who has been wounded by enemy arrows does not suffer half as much—for he may get some sleep—as he who, pierced to the quick by the cruel words of ill-natured relations, grieves day and night. I know very well that of all his daughters you are the most dear and the most esteemed of the Patriarch, who enjoys exalted status, O lovely one. But I am equally certain that because of your connection with me you will not be accorded due respect by him (Daksha), who grieves, thinking of that connection. His heart burns in him, and every sense is acutely affronted by the opulent glories of those who remain unconcerned witnesses of the mind of the *jīva*; and knowing that he can never hope to climb up to the pinnacles they occupy, he hates them as the Asuras hate Hari. The customary modes of greeting practised by men, such as rising up and going forward to receive the guest, making solicitous enquiries and prostrating oneself before him, are observed in the true spirit only by the wise, who pay their homage silently with the mind to the Supreme Lord enshrined in the heart of every being, my beautiful one, not to one who identifies himself with the body. The pure mind is described as Vāsudeva, since therein the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva shines unobscured. And there I worship the Lord Vāsudeva, Who is beyond the reach of the senses, and make My prostrations to Him. You should not so much as look at Daksha, father and author of your being though he is, nor at his followers; for he hates Me, O beautiful one, and he reviled Me in words most foul when he saw Me at the sacrifice offered by the Patriarchs, though I had in no way offended against him. If you go disregarding my words, you will not fare well. For one who is held in high esteem disgrace at the hands of his relations would amount to a sentence of death' (15-25).

CHAPTER IV

SATI, INSULTED BY DAKSHA, BURNS TO DEATH

Maitreya said: Having said this, Sankara was silent, as He reflected that in either case His wife might die. She was torn between two conflicting impulses. She would step out of the house one moment, impelled by her eagerness to see her kin, but would go back the next from fear of Bhava. Unhappy, thwarted in her desire to see her relations, Bhavānī wept in her love for them. With tear-stained eyes and a mind in turmoil, her whole body quivering with indignation, she looked at Bhava, the peerless Lord, as if she would burn Him. Then heaving great sighs, her heart rent by grief and anger, Satī, blinded by the weakness of woman, left Him, Who is loved by the saintly and had out of abounding love given her one half of His body, and went to her parents' home. As Satī hurried forth all alone, Manimān, Mada and other followers of Tṛṇetra went after her quickly and fearlessly in their thousands, along with His personal attendants and the Yakshas, headed by the great bull. They mounted her on the bull (Siva's mount) and took her in a splendid procession, garlanded, with her talking parrot and her ball, her looking glass and sportive lotus, and with all the insignia of royalty—the white umbrella over her head and the fly-whisks plying, to the music of kettle-drum, conch and flute (1-5).

She entered the sacrificial hall, filled with the sound of the Vedic chants that came from all sides, enhancing the glory of the sacrifice; there the Brahmana sages and the gods were present in large numbers, and there were to be seen vessels made of clay, wood, iron, gold, *kuśa* grass, and skin. As she entered, no one welcomed her, all of them being afraid of incurring the wrath of the sacrificer, from his insulting behaviour towards her—all, that is, except her sisters and her mother, who affectionately welcomed her, their voices choking with the tears of love. Meeting with no welcome from her father, Satī did not accept the splendid seat, or the

presents offered with love by her mother and her mother's sisters, or respond to the solicitous enquiries prompted by sisterly love. The mighty goddess noticed that no share had been allotted to Rudra in the sacrifice and her father had thus been guilty of disrespect to the Great and Omnipotent God ; and when she herself was insulted in the sacrificial assembly, she flew into a rage so terrible that it seemed as if it might reduce the world to ashes. Restraining by her authority the hosts of the elementals who were about to attack, the goddess denounced, in the hearing of all present, the enemy of Siva, who had become puffed up with pride from his assiduity in the way of works, in words that her indignation made almost incoherent (6-10).

The goddess said : ' Who but you would set himself up against Him Who looks on none as an enemy, Who knows no superior in this world and has no loves or hates, Who is dear to all creatures as their Soul and the cause of their being ? People like you, O Brahman, see only the faults of others, they do not recognise their virtues. Those are good men who applaud others' good qualities, while ignoring their defects. Supremely great, however, are those who will make much of even such small merit as there may be in others. It is to these last that you would impute blame. It is not surprising that evil men, who identify the Self with this carcase, should always speak ill of the great in pure malice. On the contrary it is just what one would expect of those whose lustre is dimmed by the dust of the feet of the supremely great. Alas for you, inauspicious one, you hate Siva of the spotless renown, Whose will none may cross, Whose name, consisting of two syllables, uttered just once and that too unintentionally or incidentally, wipes out instantly the sins of those who do that. You entertain enmity towards Him Who is the Friend of all that exists, Whose lotus feet, haunted by those bees, the minds of good men, eager to taste the honey that is the Bliss of Brahmā, rain down on the suppliant all blessings that he seeks. Did not others beside you, Brahmā and the rest, who wear on their heads what falls from His feet, know (Him Whom you speak of as) that "unclean thing called Siva, Who with His flying locks,

haunts with the ghouls the cremation grounds and decks himself with the flowers and the ashes, and the human skulls that are found there"? When men of unbridled insolence insult the Lord, Who is the safeguard of Dharma, he who can do it should forcibly tear out the tongue that utters the slander and then take his own life. If he is unequal to doing this, he should close his ears and walk out. That is the Law. Therefore, I will no more be burdened with this body that was begotten by you, the traducer of the Lord Śitikantha; has it not been laid down that a man can purify himself of the taint of unclean food, which he has heedlessly eaten, only by voiding it? (11-18).

'The mind of the total renouncer who delights in the Self is not guided by Vedic rule or prohibition. Men and gods do not tread the same path. The man who is faithful to his own Dharma should not be censorious of another whose Dharma is different. The duties incumbent on him who lives the worldly life, and those that devolve on him who has withdrawn from it are both valid since they derive their authority from the Veda; which, however, prescribes to each class its own separate duties, differentiating between them according to their characteristics and inclinations. Being contradictory, both sets of duties cannot be simultaneously practised by the same man; while on Him Who is the Brahmā Itself, no duties devolve (19-20).

'The glories that attend our state can never be yours, father. They can be traced to no obvious cause, and are the meed of those who have realized the Brahmā; unlike your achievements, which are won in the sacrificial halls and enjoyed by the votaries of the smoky way, and find their panegyrists in those who pamper the flesh, feeding on the sumptuous fare provided at the sacrificial feasts. I have done with this base-born body fathered by an evil parent, who has sinned against Hara. I have been shamed enough by my connection with a despicable father. The body that I owe to one who has offended against the supremely great, is fit only for the burning. Whenever the Lord of the bull flag should call me Dākshāyaṇī, that name which recalls my connection with you, I should, far from smiling at it as a

jest, feel exceedingly unhappy. Therefore I shall discard here and now this carcass which owes its being to you' (21-23).

Maitreya said: Having thus convicted Daksha out of his own mouth, O slayer of the foe, she sat down silently in the sacrificial hall, on the ground facing north. Performing *āchamana*, she, who had swathed herself in yellow muslin, closed her eyes and entered the path of yoga. Established in the right posture, the blameless dame restrained the *prāṇa* and *apāna* vital airs in the psychic centre at the navel and steadily raised the *udāna* breath from there, deliberately and step by step, along with the intellect, first to the heart and then, through the throat, to the junction of the eyebrows. Having thus resolved to discard, in her anger against Daksha, that body which had often been lovingly dandled on His lap by the Lord Who receives the homage of the great, the dame with perfect self-control practised the *yogic* concentration which can kindle fire with air in every limb. Purified of all taint, Satī was lost in the bliss of tasting the sweetness of the lotus feet of her Lord and Spouse, the Master of the universe, and was oblivious of all else, when the fire kindled by *samādhi* broke into a blaze and enveloped her body (24-28).

From earth and heaven rose a great shout of dismay, as all who saw that astounding happening cried out, 'Alas, alas, Satī, the beloved spouse of the Supreme Lord, has discarded her body in her wrath against Daksha. Look at the inhuman wickedness of the Patriarch, whose progeny fills all the world; because of the disgrace he has heaped on her, Satī, his own daughter, endowed with all admirable qualities, and worthy of his constant regard, has been forced to take her own life. As this intolerant person, who hates Siva and is inimical to the great Brahmanas, His devotees, did not stop his own daughter from taking her life, provoked by his offence, he shall gain endless infamy in this life' (29-30).

As the people who had witnessed the marvellous manner in which Satī had put an end to her life were saying this, Siva's attendants sprang to the attack with upraised weapons, intent on killing Daksha. On seeing their impetuous onset, the venerable Bhṛgu poured obla-

tions in the Dakṣiṇāgni, uttering the *Yajus* spells that destroy the despoilers of sacrifices. When the *adhvaryu* thus summoned them, the gods known as the Ṛbhus, who had been allotted a share of *soma* in the sacrifice as the reward of their austerities, rose up in their thousands and opposed them with all their strength. Attacked with whirling firebrands by them, who glowed with Brāhmic lustre, the Pramathas and the Guhyakas scattered in all directions (31-34).

CHAPTER V

DAKSHA SLAIN BY VIRABHADRA

Maitreya continued : On hearing from Nārada of the death of Bhavānī, whom the Patriarch had insulted, and the putting to flight of the forces of His retainers by the Ṛbhus in the sacrifice, Bhava was in a towering rage. Biting His lip in His wrath, the terrible Dhūrjati sprang up, plucked a lock of His matted hair that blazed like lightning or a tongue of flame, and flung it down on the ground with a laugh that was like thunder. From that lock sprang up one with a titanic body that touched the sky. Black as a cloud, and possessing a thousand arms, and three eyes that were like so many suns, fierce tusks and hair that looked like tongues of flame, he was garlanded with skulls and armed with every kind of weapon. When he, with folded hands, humbly prayed, 'What shall I do?' the exalted Lord, Lord of all creatures, told him, 'You shall be the chief of my forces, O terrible warrior, born of a fraction of Me, and you shall destroy Daksha and his sacrifice.' Thus ordered by Rudra in His wrath, he reverently circumambulated the Great God, the Lord Who is everywhere ; and he felt confident of foiling by his irresistible speed of attack the onslaught of even the mightiest, my child. Followed by the attendants of Rudra, who let off piercing yells, he rushed forth with a frightful roar, the anklets on his feet clanging fiercely, his trident, which might slaughter Death himself, raised aloft (1-6).

When they saw the cloud of dust in the north, the priests, the sacrificer, the members of the assembly, the Brahmanas and their wives, thought at first that it was the onset of night; but when they realized that it was dust, they wondered, 'Where does this dust come from? There is no stiff breeze blowing; nor are there marauders about, for Prāchīnabarhis lives and rules with a rod of iron. Cows are not so early driven home. How then is one to account for this dust? Is the world by any chance set for instant dissolution?' The women, Prasūti and others, exclaimed with fear in their hearts, 'This is surely the fruit of the Patriarch's sin in insulting, before his other daughters, his blameless daughter Satī. He had caused intense provocation to the Lord of the irresistible puissance, Who at the time of the world's ending impales the elephants of the quarters on the point of His trident, and dances in wild glee with His matted locks flying, His arms with upraised weapons flung over His head like banners waving, His maniac laughter splitting the quarters with the crash of thunder. Even the Creator would not be safe, if having once irritated Him, he should again incense the Lord, Who is bubbling with wrath, Whose knitted brow carries all before it, Whose fierce tusks scatter the stars in their courses' (7-11).

As the people were thus complaining, and looking about them apprehensively, there appeared in the sky, on the earth, and everywhere in fact, dire portents again and again, rousing fear even in the doughty heart of Daksha. Before he could do anything about it, the great sacrifice had been invaded by Rudra's followers, who rushed in from all sides, armed with every kind of weapon, O Vidura. Dwarfish in stature, yellow or reddish-brown in complexion, they had faces and bellies shaped like the *makara*. Some snapped the bamboo beam that connected the eastern and the western poles which supported the sacrificial hall; others destroyed the apartment occupied by the sacrificer's wives, the assembly hall, the place where the sacrificial fire is kindled, the quarters of the sacrificer, and the kitchen. Some broke the sacrificial vessels, others put out the sacred fires; some pissed in the fire-pits, others cut the cords that formed the boundary of the northern altar. Some

attacked the sages, others threatened the women, yet others caught hold of the gods who came within their reach, even as they were running away. Maṇimān tied up Bhṛgu, Vīrabhadra the Patriarch ; Chandiśa secured the god Pūshā, and Nandiśvara, Bhaga. The priests, the members of the assembly and the gods, who saw all this happen, and who were themselves assailed by them with stones in hot pursuit, scattered in all directions. The mighty Vīrabhadra pulled off the beard and moustaches of Bhṛgu as he was pouring oblations into the fire with a ladle, since he had laughed in derision in the assembly, sticking out his beard. He plucked the eyes of Bhaga, whom he threw down on the ground in his rage, since he, sitting in the assembly, had with a wink encouraged him (Daksha) when he was heaping abuse on Siva. And he knocked out the teeth of Pūshā, as Bala had done those of the King of Kalinga, because he had laughed, showing all his teeth, when the supremely great Lord was being maligned. The three-eyed warrior, planting his foot on Daksha's breast, sought to sever his head with a sharp-edged sword, but could not. When he saw that his skin could not be cut even by weapons powered with spells, Hara (Vīrabhadra) was amazed, and he thought over the matter for a long time. Then he bethought him of the method, adopted in sacrifices, of strangling the victims ; and by that means severed the head of the Patriarch from the body, offering him up as sacrifice. The elementals, the spirits of the departed and the ghouls applauded that act, while others denounced it. In his wrath he (Vīrabhadra) offered up the head as oblation in the Dakṣiṇāgni, and then, having burnt down the hall of sacrifice, set out for the abode of the Guhyakat (12-26).

CHAPTER VI

THE GODS BESEECH SIVA'S FORGIVENESS

Maitreya said : Then the terrified hosts of the gods, having suffered defeat at the hands of Rudra's forces, their limbs hacked and hewed by spears, javelins, swords, maces, iron clubs and hammers, went with the priests

and the members of the assembly to the Self-existent Lord (Brahmā). Making their prostrations to him, they told him of all that had happened. Having foreseen what would happen, the blessed Lord, the Lotus-born, and Narayana, the Soul of the universe, had kept away from Daksha's sacrifice. Brahmā now told them, 'Even if one of supreme power should have done wrong, attempts at retaliation could only recoil on those who made them. But, it was you who were guilty of a great offence in denying Bhava His share in the sacrifice. Go to Him with pure and contrite hearts, and placate Him, Who is easily propitiated, by clasping His lotus feet. Since you wish to get the sacrifice going again, go quickly and beg pardon of the God whose anger means the destruction of the worlds and all their Guardians. He was wounded to the quick by vile words, and has suffered the loss of His spouse. Who can think of any other way of pacifying Him Who acts in perfect freedom, Whose essential truth is as little known as the extent of His strength and prowess, even to me, or to Yajna¹, to you or to the sages and other mortals?' (1-7).

Having thus advised the gods, the Unborn left his own home, accompanied by the gods, the manes and the Patriarchs, and went to the great mountain Kailāsa, the favourite abode of Siva, the Foe-of-the-fortresses. The gods were lost in wonder as they looked at the mountain habitation of the Lord Who rules all lives. It was occupied by those who were gods by birth and those who had become celestials by various means—by the use of herbs, the practice of austerities, the repetition of *mantras* or the performance of yoga. It was always crowded with Kinnaras, Gandharvas and Apsarases; and it brought unfailing delight to the Siddhas' womenfolk—who loved to sport there with their spouses—with its many peaks that abounded in precious stones and rich veins of variegated mineral ores and were covered with a dense growth of trees, vines and thickets of every description, and were profusely dotted with animal herds, crystal-clear cascades, caves and ridges. It resounded with the cawing of peacocks and the melodious hum of drunken bees. It seemed to beckon to all bird-life

¹ Who was the Indra of that Manvantara.

with the soaring boughs of trees that yielded all that the heart desired, and to call them with the long-drawn notes of the koel and the warbling of other birds. It looked as if it moved when its tusked moved, and spoke with the voice of its waterfalls. It was gay with its *mandāra*, *pārijāta* and *devadāru* trees. *Tamāla*, *sāl* and palm, *kovidāra*, *asana* and *arjuna*, mango, *kadamba* and *nīpa*, *nāga*, *punnāga* and *champakā*, *pātala*, *asoka* and *bakula*, *kunda* and *kurabaka*, the golden lotus, superior varieties of cardamom, *mālati*, saffron, *mallikā* and *mādhavī*, adorned it. Jack-fruit and fig, peepul, *plaksha* and banyan, asafoetida, birch and medicinal herbs, betel vine, *rāja-pūga* and rose-apple, date and hog-plum and mango, *priyāla*, mahua and *ingudi* and trees of other species, as well as the bamboo, solid and hollow, enriched it. The sweet warbling of flocks of birds from the lotus pools, to which they were drawn by the wealth of *kumuda* and *utpala*, *kalhāra* and lotus, added to its attractions. It was the haunt of deer and monkey, of hog and lion, of bear and porcupine, *gavaya* and *śarabha*, tiger, *ruru*, buffalo and the like; as well as of *karnāntras*, *ekapādas*, *aśvāsya*s, and musk-deer. The sand-flats of lotus pools, bordered by plantain clumps, lent it a quiet charm. The Nandā (Gangā) whose waters carried the perfume of Satī, who bathed in them, encircled it (8-22).

And there they beheld the beautiful city of Alakā and the wood Saugandhika, where is to be found the lotus that bears that name. Outside the city ran the streams, Nandā and Alakanandā, rendered supremely pure by the sanctifying dust of the lotus feet of the Lord Hari. The goddesses, tired by their love sport, get into their waters from their aerial cars and plunge in them, and enjoy themselves, splashing water on their spouses. And the elephants drink, and make their cows drink too, though they are not thirsty, of that water, which is yellow with the saffron washed off the bodies of the goddesses when they bathe. The city, filled with hundreds of lofty mansions built of silver and gold and precious stone, and occupied by the women of the *Punyajanas* (Yakshas), recalled the sky filled with clouds and lightning (23-27).

They (the gods) passed beyond the city of the Lord of the Yakshas and the charming Saugandhika wood, which beguiled the heart with its bountiful trees laden with every kind of flower, fruit and shoot, and resounded with the hum of bees enriched by the song of hundreds of koels, and was, with its lotus pools, the favourite haunt of flocks of swans. The breeze that carried the scent of sandal trees against which wild elephants had rubbed themselves, set up a fever in the blood of Yaksha women. In that wood were sheets of water with an abundance of lotus flowers, into which one descended by steps of cat's-eye; to them the Kimpurushas came in large numbers (28-31).

They saw not far away the banyan tree, which was a hundred *yojanas* in height, its branches extending all around to a distance of seventy-five *yojanas*. It cast a permanent shade all round it, and no bird built its nest in it. One never felt the heat there. Under that tree, where were to be garnered all the fruits of the highest yoga, and where aspirants to liberation made their home, the gods saw Siva seated, like Death who had put aside anger. He looked the very picture of peace: the great Siddhas, Sanandana and the rest, who had attained serenity, waiting upon Him along with His companion, (Kubera) the sovereign lord of the Guhyakas and Rākshasas. They beheld Him, the Lord Paramount of the worlds, the Friend of all that exists, engaged in worship and single-minded contemplation, thus promoting (by His example) the good of all mankind out of His abounding love. His body was ruddy like the evening cloud, and He had the marks that men devoted to austerities carry—the sacred ash, the staff, matted locks, and the skin of the antelope—and on His crest He wore the digit of the moon. Seated on a seat of *kuśa* grass, with His left foot resting on the right thigh and his left arm on the knee, with the string of *rudrāksha* beads on the right forearm, and the right hand held in the *tarka-mudrā*, He was expounding the Brahmā Everlasting, in answer to the inquiries of Nārada, with the saints listening (32-38).

To Him, the Lord-of-the-hills, the first of contemplatives, as He thus sat absorbed in the Bliss of Brahmā,

with the yogi's band supporting His knee, the sages and the Guardians of the worlds made their obeisance with clasped hands. When He, Whose feet receive the homage of the lords of the gods and the Asuras, saw that His parent (Brahmā) was come, He got up and made His bow to him; even as Vishnu, the highest of all who are entitled to worship, makes His prostrations to the Patriarch (Kaśyapa). Thereupon all present, the bands of Siddhas, the great *rishis* and others who attended on the Lord of the Black Throat, did likewise. Honoured thus by the gods, he (Brahmā) spoke with a smile to the Lord-of-the-moony-crest to Whom the gods had made their prostrations (39-41).

Brahmā said: 'I know that Thou art the Supreme Lord of the universe from Whom originated Śiva and Sakti, its seed and womb, and at the same time Thou art the undifferentiated and immutable Brahma. Thou Thyself, O Lord, playing Thy play, using Śiva and Sakti, who are not really different from Thee, createst, protectest and destroyest the universe, even as the spider deals with its web. It was Thou That didst start the sacrifice, using Daksha as Thy instrument, for the protection of the Veda, which is prolific of Dharma and Artha. And Thou Thyself hast established the norms of Dharma, to which the Brahmanas, who are firm in their vows, are faithful. Thou, O auspicious Lord, conferrest on those that apply themselves to good works, heaven or even liberation, while Thou consignest to the most horrid of hells those who do evil. How then (it might be asked) does the same *karma* produce contrary results, in the case of some men? Unlike the ignorant man, the saintly souls, who cleave to Thy feet, who see Thee in all creatures and see all creatures in their own soul, and as not different from it, rarely succumb to anger. The men who labour under the sense of difference and are devoted to the way of works, whose wicked hearts are ever harrowed by the sight of others' prosperity, whose insults rankle, are destroyed by their own *karmas*; they should not meet with their death at the hands of the like of Thee. When men whose understanding is confounded by the irresistible Māyā of the Lord of the lotus navel offend against good men, these

latter do not employ their powers to their hurt, because what was done was done under the compulsion of fate. On the other hand they, taking pity on them, even then repay them with kindness. Thou, O Lord, art immune against the endless Māyā of the Supreme Lord and art omniscient. Therefore it behoves Thee to take pity on those who succumb to it and are taken up with *karma*, and bestow Thy grace on them (42-49).

‘Permit, O Lord That art the embodiment of the *mantras*, the due completion of the sacrifice of the patriarch, which was violated by your retainer and left unfinished, that sacrifice in which unworthy priests failed to give Thy share to Thee That allottest the fruits of the sacrifice. Let the sacrificer live; let his eyes be restored to Bhagā; let Bhṛgu’s beard grow again, and Pūshā have his teeth. By Thy grace, O Rudra, let the wounds be quickly healed of the gods and the priests who suffered damage to their limbs by weapons and stones. Henceforth all materials that are left over after the performance of a sacrifice shall be Thy share, O Rudra. Let the sacrifice be consummated now with Thy share, O Destroyer of the sacrifice’ (50-53).

CHAPTER VII

SIVA RESTORES DAKSHA TO LIFE

Maitreya said: Bhava, thus bescught by the Unborn, was pleased. The Great God told him with a laugh, ‘Listen. I do not make much of the offence of ignorant folk who succumbed to the Lord’s Māyā, O Lord of all creatures, and I do not allow the memory thereof to rankle in my mind. I only chastised them for their good. The head of a goat shall grow on the trunk of the patriarch, in the place of his head, which was burnt. Bhaga shall see his share of the sacrificial offerings with Mitra’s eyes. Pūshā, who shall have an offering made of dough, shall consume it with the teeth of the sacrificer. Since the gods have now allotted me a share in the sacrifice, their bodies shall be made whole. The priests and others shall have the use of the arms of

the Aśvins and the hands of Pūshā. Bhṛgu shall get a goat's beard' (1-5).

Maitreya said : Hearing what the supremely bountiful Lord said, all creatures were delighted, and they applauded, saying, 'Excellent, excellent'. Desiring the bountiful Lord to go with them, the gods, accompanied by Him, the Creator and the sages, repaired to the sacrificial grounds. Doing all that the Lord Bhava had commanded to be done, they joined the head of the sacrificial animal to the trunk of the patriarch. When Rudra cast a kind look on Daksha as the head was being joined, the latter got up instantly, as if waking from sleep, and he saw Mr̥da before him. The heart of the patriarch, muddled by his enmity to the Lord-of-the-bull-flag, became limpid and pure as the pools of autumn by virtue of the look that Śiva cast on him. He wished to sing the praises of Bhava, but could not proceed for the very love that welled up in him and the tears of un-availing regret that choked him as he thought of his dead daughter. Calming himself with an effort, the wise patriarch extolled the Supreme Lord in the fullness of his heart, with sincere devotion (6-12).

Daksha said : 'Great indeed is the favour that Thou hast shown me by chastising me, though I was guilty of disrespect towards Thee. The two of you, Thyself and Hari, do not ignore with contempt the Brahmana, even if he is a Brahmana only in name ; how then could you disregard those that are keen on their vows ? Thou, as Brahmā, createdest out of Thy mouth, at the very beginning, the Brahmanas devoted to learning, austerities and vows, in order to preserve the Veda and propagate the knowledge of the Self. Therefore, O Supreme and all-powerful Lord, Thou safeguardest the Brahmanas against all perils, as the herdsman does his charge, armed with the stick. May His good deed be its own reward for the exalted Lord Who, not minding the barbed and wicked words with which I, in my ignorance of the Supreme Reality, assailed Him in the sacrificial hall, saved me, with His eyes dropping mercy, from falling headlong into hell for maligning Him Who is supremely worth honouring' (13-15).

Maitreya went on : Having thus sought the forgive-

ness of the bountiful Lord and received the permission of Brahmā, he got the priests, preceptors and others to complete the sacrifice. The worthy Brahmanas made the offering to Vishnu, cooked in three shards, for the uninterrupted completion of the sacrifice and for purification after the incursion by fighters. Along with the chief priest, who held in his hand the sacrificial oblation, the sacrificer meditated on the Lord with a heart that was pure, O ruler of the people, and thereupon Hari appeared on the scene, brought there by Tārkshya, who has the two (types of Sāma) hymns for wings. He eclipsed the lustre of all those present by His splendour, which lit up the ten directions. Dark-complexioned, clad in raiment of a golden yellow, held by a zone, wearing a crown that shone like the sun, and black curls like bees adorning the face with its ear-pendants. He looked like the *karnikāra* in bloom, with His eight arms, which gleamed like gold, and seemed to grasp the conch, the lotus, the discus, the bow and the arrow, the mace, the sword and the buckler (in their eagerness to protest His devotees). With His spouse ensconced on His breast, and the garland of wild flowers on his neck, He rejoiced the hearts of all the world with His gracious and smiling glance. The fan and the fly-whisk, plying on either side, looked like attendant swans, and the white umbrella enhanced His splendour, shining over His head like the moon. The moment they saw Him enter, all the gods and others assembled, led by Brahmā, Indra and the Triple-eyed, got up in all haste and made their bow to Him. Their splendour dimmed by His glory, their hearts in a flutter, they praised Adhokshaja in faltering tones, their hands clasped over their heads. Though their minds could not compass His greatness, the Self-created and others praised Him to the best of their ability; for His very coming was a blessing (16-25).

Fetching¹ the splendid vessel containing the materials used in worship, Daksha besought the mercy of the Lord with single-minded devotion; and with joined palms he extolled the Lord of the sacrifice, the Supreme Master and Mentor of the patriarchs, Who was

¹ (v. r.) 'Placing in His hands.'

attended by Sunanda, Nanda, and other principal retainers. Dakṣa said : ' Established in Thy essential Being, Thou, O Lord, art pure Consciousness, untroubled by the modalities of the intellect, untouched by difference, and free from fear. When Thou, making Māyā subservient to Thy designs, utilizest her of Thy own choice to put on the human guise, Thou appearest in that state as if Thou wert imperfect ' (26).

The priests said : ' O Lord Thou art free from the taint of Māyā, we have been stupidly addicted to *karma* because of the curse pronounced by Rudra's follower, and therefore could not know the real truth of Thee. But we know the sacrifice, which is Thy body, which is expounded in the Veda and is productive of Dharma (religious merit) and for the due fulfilment of which different functions have been assigned to the different gods.' (27).

The members of the assembly prayed, ' O Lord, our Refuge, when shall the caravan of the ignorant, labouring under the burden of the body, house and home, and tormented by sensuality, reach its resting place marked by Thy feet, having plodded on the weary way of the transmigratory life, where one finds no shelter and must go through endless travails, with the dread serpent, death, lurking ready to pounce, while the mind is mocked by the mirage of sense enjoyments ; where one may stumble into those deep pits by the wayside, pleasure and pain, and all the other pairs of opposites, or be in perpetual fear of those wild beasts, the human riff-raff, or in imminent danger of being engulfed by the forest fire of grief ? ' (28).

Sri Rudra said : ' If the ignorant world foolishly talks of Me—whose heart cleaves to Thy glorious feet, which shower all blessings on those who entertain desires, and are worthy of the ardent worship of even the sages who are free from all desire—as having deviated from the way of life approved by the Sāstra, I do not mind that at all, O Lord of boons, fortified as I am by Thy supreme grace ' (29).

Bhṛgu said : ' Look with an indulgent eye on my transgression, O Lord That succourest Thy suppliant ; for all who are burdened with the body, from Brahmā

downwards, lie engulfed in darkness, the knowledge of the Self veiled from them by Thy Māyā, and even now they do not realize that Thou art bound up with their own soul' (30).

Brahmā said : ' This figure of Thine, being one which may be grasped by the senses, which distinguish between various objects, is not Thy essential being ; it is of the substance of Māyā, being the abode of the senses, the objects thereof and the *Sattva-guṇa*, their cause ' (31).

Indra said : ' Real enough, O Achyuta, is this body of Thine, with its eight stout arms ready with their weapons to destroy the enemies of the gods ! It protects the universe and rejoices the mind and the eye ' (32).

The spouses (of the priests) said : ' The sacrifice, originally devised by Brahmā for Thy worship, has been destroyed this day by Paśupati in His anger against Daksha. May Thou be pleased, O Lord That hast the sacrifice for Thy body, to purify, by a glance from Thine eyes that shine like the lotus, this sacrifice of ours, which looks like the cremation ground, all festivities connected with it having come to a dead stop ' (33).

The sages said : ' Incongruous are Thy ways, O Lord. For, while performing *karmas*, Thou art not affected by them, and Thou payest no particular regard to Her (Lakshmi), the sovereign mistress of the worlds, Who cleaves to Thee, while all the worlds worship Her, praying for prosperity ' (34).

The Siddhas said : ' Our mind, scorched by afflictions like an elephant by the forest fire, and tormented by thirst (for the pleasures of the senses), plunged in Thy tale, that stream of pure nectar, and forgot the fire. And it will not come out of the stream, any more than he will, who has merged in the Bliss of Brahma ' (35).

The wife of the sacrificer said, ' Welcome to Thee, O Lord, with Whom Sri abides. I offer Thee my salutations. Without Thee, the sacrifice, for all the opulence of its other features, is no more attractive than a headless trunk. Do take pity on us and give us Thy protection, with Thy consort by Thy side ' (36).

The Guardians of the worlds said : ' Do these senses of ours, which perceive the products of Māyā, really

apprehend Thee, O Lord? It is Thou, Who, seated in the heart, seest, O Lord that art perfection, the world of objects. It is because of Thy Māyā that Thou, the Sixth (transcending the five senses), appearest as if Thou wert possessed of a body composed of the five elements' (37).

The master-yogis said : ' No one is dearer to Thee, O Lord, than he who sees no difference between himself and Thee, the Soul of the universe. Be pleased, however, O Lover of Thy devotees, to bestow Thy gracious blessing on those who look upon Thee as their Master and give Thee their undivided devotion. We offer our salutations to Him Who causes the notion of difference to be entertained in regard to Himself through the instrumentality of His own Māyā, whose *guṇas* undergo many modifications when the work of creation, preservation and destruction, necessitated by the *karmas* of the *jīvas*, calls for it ; but Who, reposing in His own essence, eternally repels the error of difference and the *guṇas* that cause it' (38-39).

The Vedas said : ' Salutations to Thee That conferest on men Dharma and all the other goods, taking a form compact of *sattva*, and art at the same time devoid of all attributes. Neither we nor any one else knows the ultimate truth of Thee ' (40).

The god of fire (Agni) said : ' I make my humble prostrations to the Lord Who has the sacrifice for His body and Who is its Protector ; Who in His fivefold form (as the sacrifice) is propitiated by the five *Yajus mantras*. It is His puissance that imparts to me the power to burn bright and convey the oblations soaked in ghee, which are offered in the well-conducted sacrifice ' (41).

The gods said : ' Thou, O Primordial Lord, That art visible to us this day and hast us in Thy keeping, art the self-same One Who, at the time of the dissolution of the worlds, lay down on the waters on Thy splendid couch, the body of the Lord of the serpents, having retracted into Thyself the entire world of effects, Thy creation, while the Siddhas meditated in their hearts on Thee, taking to the way of discriminating knowledge ' (42).

The Gandharvas said, 'All those who are present here, Marichi and the other sages, Brahmā, Indra, Rudra and all the other gods are but fractions of a fraction of Thee, O Supreme Lord, Whose plaything is the universe. Before Thee we abase ourselves eternally' (43).

The Vidyādhara said: 'The stupid man who, having won this body, which could be the means of gaining the supreme end of life (release), is confounded by Thy Māyā and comes to entertain the notions of "me" and "mine" in regard to it, goes on hankering after the delusive pleasures of the senses, even though he is caused endless grief by his own people who transgress all bounds of decency. But he who drinks in with his ears Thy tale, the nectar of immortality, leaves that delusion far behind him' (44).

The Brahmanas said, 'Thou art the sacrifice, the oblation and the fire too, the *mantra*, the fuel, the *darbha* grass and the sacrificial vessels; and Thou art as well the members of the assembly, the officiating priests, the sacrificer couple, the god to whom the sacrifice is offered, the *agnihotra* rite, the offering made to the manes, the *soma* juice, the ghee, and the animal that is offered up as sacrifice. O Lord, That hast the three Vedas for Thy body, and art Thyself the sacrifice of both kinds, that with the stake and that without, Thou wert incarnate as the great Boar in the far past, and didst lift up the earth from the nether regions with Thy tusk as effortlessly as the elephant lifts up a lotus stalk, letting off a mighty roar as Thou didst so, while the yogis hymned Thee. Have compassion on us, who, engaging in the holy rite, were unable to conclude it properly, and who have been yearning for a sight of Thee. We make our prostrations to Thee, O Protector of the sacrifice. Even as men utter Thy name, all obstacles to the proper performance of sacrifices vanish' (45-47).

Maitreya resumed his narrative: While Hṛshīkeśa, the Protector of the sacrifice, was being thus extolled, the capable Daksha restarted the sacrifice, which had been disturbed by Rudra (Virabhadra), my friend. The exalted Lord, the Soul in all beings and Partaker of the oblations offered to all the gods, spoke to Daksha

as if He were particularly pleased to receive His own share, O blameless one. The Lord said: 'I am the First Cause of the universe and its Ātman and Supreme Controller, and Self-luminous Witness, unqualified by limiting adjuncts; and I am Brahṁā and Sarva too. Employing My own Māyā, composed of the *guṇas*, I engage in the creation, protection and destruction of the universe, O Brahman, and in these different activities bear different names appropriate to them. In Me the Brahma, the One without a second, the Paramātmā Who is free from all attachments, the man who is in the grip of nescience sees Brahṁā, Rudra and every other creature as different and distinct entities. He who is devoted to Me makes no invidious distinction between creature and creature, regarding some as his own and others as alien, any more than one does between the different members of one's own body, the head, the hand, and so on. He who sees no difference between the Three Gods, who are one in essence, and who ensoul all creatures, attains the peace that passes understanding, O Brahman' (48-54).

Maitreya went on: Thus advised by the exalted Lord, the chief of the patriarchs first propitiated Hari with the rite that was specific to Him, and then worshipped the gods with both the principal and the ancillary rites. With a collected mind, he worshipped Rudra, offering Him His share. He propitiated those gods who had quaffed *soma* as well as others, by the concluding rite, and then took the lustral bath along with the priests. And the gods returned to their celestial abodes, blessing him, who had achieved his goal by his own greatness, with the blessing, 'May you have unshaken faith in Dharma.' It is said that Daksha's daughter, who had discarded her body, as already described, was born again as the daughter of Menā, the wife of Himavān. And even as His power Māyā, when it is roused to activity, seeks out the Lord, Ambikā again chose as her spouse the Lord Whom she loved dearly, and Who is the sure goal of those who give their whole-hearted devotion to Him (55-59).

I had this account of the Lord Sambhu's wrecking of Daksha's sacrifice, from that devotee of the Lord,

Uddhava, the disciple of Br̥haspati. He who constantly hears, and relates to others, this account of the sanctifying deed of the Lord, which has the power to bring the hearer fame and length of life and to dispel all sins, will be freed from the miseries of the worldly life, O son of the Kurus, by his loving devotion (60-61).

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF DHRUVA

Maitreya continued: Sanaka and his brothers, Nārada, R̥bhu, Hamsa, Āruṇi and Yati—none of these sons of Brahmā entered on the householder's life, as they had taken the vow of lifelong celibacy. Mr̥shā (untruth), the wife of Adharma, gave birth to a pair, Dambha (hypocrisy) and Māyā (deceit), O slayer of the foe. And Nir̥rti (the Rākshasa presiding over the South-West), being childless, adopted them. They begot Lobha (covetousness) and Nik̥rti (wickedness), O sagacious one. Those two begot Krodha (anger) and Himsā (violence). And these in their turn begot Bhaya (fear) and Mr̥tyu (death), O best of men. And they brought forth Yātanā (suffering) and Niraya (hell). I have now described in brief the progeny of Adharma, which is the ultimate cause of the dissolution of the universe, O blameless one. The man who hears thrice this account of it wins merit and sheds his sins (1-5).

And now I shall describe, O first of the Kurus, the story of the descendants of Manu of the sanctifying renown, son of the Self-existent, who was himself an *amśa* of Hari. Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, the sons of Manu by his wife Satarūpā, were engaged in the task of ruling the world, since they were born with a fraction of the sovereign attributes of Vāsudeva. Uttānapāda had two wives, Sunīti and Suruchi. Suruchi was the favourite of her husband, not the other, who was the mother of Dhruva. When the King was once fondling Suruchi's son Uttama on his lap, he did not welcome Dhruva's attempt to climb on to his lap. When she saw what her rival's son Dhruva wanted, Suruchi in her

inordinate pride spoke to him spitefully, while the King was listening: 'You are not fit for a King's throne, child, a King's son though you are; for you were not born of me. You are but a child, and you entertain this impossible ambition, not realizing that another woman bore you in her womb. If you would ascend the throne, you should propitiate the Supreme Lord, and by His grace be born again as my child' (6-13).

Maitreya said: Wounded by the harsh words of his stepmother, he heaved angry sighs, as a snake hit with a stick will hiss. Turning his back on the King, who sat speechless, seeing all that was happening, he went weeping to his mother. Sunīti took on her lap the sobbing child whose nether lip quivered in anger. Learning from the attendants of the women's apartments what her rival had said, she was filled with anguish. Overwhelmed by her sorrows like the creeper in a forest fire, the poor young woman lost heart and bewailed her fate, her eyes, lovely as the lotus, streaming as she thought of her rival's words. Seeing no end to her sufferings, she heaved a long sigh, and she told her child, 'You must not think ill of others, my child; it is the suffering that one has caused others that rebounds on oneself. Suruchi spoke the bare truth; for it was unfortunate I, whom the King is ashamed even to acknowledge as his wife, that bore you and nourished you on the milk of my breast. Therefore, my child, do not be angry with her, for stepmother though she is, she spoke the truth. Do as she told you; if you wish to ascend the throne like Uttama, you should worship the lotus feet of Adhokshaja. It was by cleaving to those feet—worthy of the homage of all who have won control of the mind and the breath—of the Lord, Who took a form compact of pure *sattva* for the protection of the universe, that the Unborn (Brahmā) attained the highest of all positions. Likewise, it was by worshipping Him with one-pointed devotion, offering many a sacrifice with ample fees, that your grandfather, the exalted Manu, attained supreme happiness, gaining the paramount lordship of the earth, the joys of heaven, and liberation too, none of which can be won by other means. Therefore, my child, take refuge in Him Who loves His faithful servants, while the

track of His lotus feet has to be assiduously sought by aspirants to liberation. Establish Him, the Supreme Lord, in your heart, purified by fidelity to your own Dharma and devoted wholly to Him, and give yourself to His worship. I can think of none other than Him of the lotus eyes, who can dispel your grief, my dear ; the Goddess Sri herself, with the lotus in her hand, is ever seeking Him, while all the worlds are after her, to win her grace' (14-23).

Maitreya went on : Hearing his mother's lament, which showed him how he could attain his wish, he controlled his mind by an effort of will, and went away from his father's city. Nārada came to hear of it. He was filled with wonder at what he (Dhruva) was bent upon doing. As he laid on his head the hand that abolishes sins, he exclaimed to himself, 'Ah ! how wonderful is this spirit of the Kshatriya, who will brook no insult ! Here is one who is a mere child, but see how his stepmother's wicked words rankle in his breast !' (24-26).

Nārada spoke to him, saying, 'I cannot imagine such things as disgrace or honour meaning anything to you, for you are still a child whose mind should be running on toys. Even if you are affected by such feelings, there are no causes for a man's unhappiness other than the error he labours under, since joy and sorrow alike stem from one's own deeds. Therefore the intelligent man, knowing the ways of God's Providence, should be content with whatever is dealt out to him by destiny, my child (27-29).

'To my mind it is no easy thing to propitiate Him Whose grace you would invoke by the means your mother has taught you ; for even the sages, who have sought it over many lives through the intense concentration of yoga, abjuring all ties, have not been able to discover the way to reach the Lord. Therefore abandon this obstinate resolve, which is bound to be futile. You may make a strenuous effort later, when the time is propitious for achievement. The mortal who finds contentment amidst the joys and sorrows that are alike decreed by destiny, passes beyond the bounds ofnescience. One should rejoice to find a man who is supe-

rior to one in virtues, sympathise with him who is one's inferior, and desire friendship with him who is one's equal. That way one is saved from heart-burning' (30-33).

To this Dhruva made answer, saying, 'The blessed sage has shown me how peace of mind may be won by those who are buffeted by joys and sorrows; it is what the like of us can never hope to find out by ourselves. But it is counsel that does not stick in my mind. Being born with the violent disposition of the Kshatriya, I know no humility, and my heart is mangled by the cruel verbal darts of Suruchi. Be pleased to show me, O Brahman, how I may win my way to that position which is the crown and summit of the three worlds, and which neither my ancestors nor others ever occupied. For you, blessed sage, born of the loins of the Supreme Creator, move about the worlds for their good, like the sun, playing on your *vīṇā*' (34-38).

Maitreya went on : Pleased to hear those words, the blessed Nārada gave him sage counsel out of his abundant kindness. Nārada told him, 'The way your mother showed you is the best for gaining your cherished wish. That way is the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. Cleave to Him with a loving and humble heart. If a man would win for himself any of those goods which are known as Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha, there is only one way by which he can do it; that way is the worship of Hari's feet. Betake yourself, therefore, my child, to the holy Madhuvana on the bank of the Yamunā, where Hari is eternally present, and may all good attend you ! While living there, you should bathe thrice a day in the purifying waters of the Kālindī and offer such worship as is within your competence. Then, seating yourself on a prepared seat, you should steadily cleanse the life-breath, the senses and the mind by the three modes of breath-control, and concentrate the mind, thus fortified, on the Supreme Lord, Hari, the Mentor in our hearts. Think of Him as ever ready to bestow His blessings, the face and eyes dropping grace; as surpassing the gods in beauty, with the lovely nose and eyebrows and those charming cheeks; in the bloom of youth, with enchantment in every limb, and the lips and eyes a

warm red. Conjure Him up before the mind's eye as the Refuge of the suppliant and his untold wealth, the Saviour and Lord of compassion, infinite as the ocean; distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark; dark-hued like the rain-cloud; possessed of all the distinctive features of the Mahāpurusha; wearing the garland of sylvan flowers, and carrying in His four hands the shining conch-shell and the discus, the mace and the lotus; with a crown on His head, and ear-pendants, armlets and bracelets; His neck enhancing the beauty of the Kausthubha jewel, His body clad in yellow silks, a girdle on the waist and burnished anklets on the feet; a vision of radiant loveliness and peace surpassing, an endless delight to mind and eye. Picture Him to yourself as planting those feet, with their nails shining like a row of gems, on the pericarp of the heart-lotus of those who worship Him with pure devotion, and establishing Himself firmly in their minds. Having by such sustained efforts steadied the mind and made it capable of unbroken meditation, one should think on Him, Who is the foremost of the bestowers of boons, as having a smile on His face and a loving look. The mind that thus contemplates the auspicious form of the Lord is quickly filled with ineffable bliss and does not revert from that state (39-52).

‘And while engaged thus, one should, O prince, recite under one’s breath the great *mantra* which is the most solemn of mysteries, and which I shall now reveal to you; he who practises this *japa* for a week sees the celestials ranging in the sky. *Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*—‘Reverence to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva’—this is the *mantra* repeating which the wise man should offer worship to the Lord with various propitiatory offerings, according to the exigencies of time and place. With pure water and with flowers, with roots and fruits available in the forest, with sprouts and tree-bark prescribed by the Sāstra (as substitute for clothing) and with the holy basil, which He loves, he should propitiate the Almighty Lord. He may worship Him in an image made of some material, or in the earth, in the water, and so on. He should do it with his mind controlled, steady and attentive, speaking little and eating sparingly of forest produce. He should dwell upon the fascinating

deeds of prowess which the illustrious Lord will be doing in the incarnations He will take of His own free will, by means of His unique and ineffable power. All the items of worship already detailed should be offered to the Lord Who is incarnate in the *mantra*, with the utterance of the secret incantation (53-58).

‘Worshipping the Lord thus with whole-hearted devotion engaging body, mind and speech, enhances the love that sincere devotees offering zealous worship come to entertain for Him, and He grants them any blessings that they may desire, falling within the scope of Dharma, Artha and Kāma. If one who has developed a distaste for the pleasures of the senses should worship the Lord with sustained devotion and limitless love, that will make for his instant release.’ Thus instructed, the boy prince went round him in all reverence, prostrated himself before him and repaired to the holy Madhuvana adorned by the footprints of Hari (59-62).

When he had left for the penitential woods, the sage betook himself to the private apartments of the King. Receiving the customary honours, he seated himself in comfort and spoke to the King. Nārada asked, ‘Why is your face so wan? You seem to be beset with endless cares. I hope there is no diminution of your enjoyments or of your progress in Dharma wedded to affluence’ (63-64).

The King answered, ‘Heartless, and a woman’s slave, I banished from my home my five-year-old child, along with his mother—my child, O Brahman, who is immensely intelligent and possessed of all virtues. Who knows but wolves might devour him, as he, alone and unfriended in the forest, lies down tired and hungry, the lotus face wilting. Alas, sir, you shall hear of my wickedness. Cowed by the presence of a woman, I, worthless creature that I am, would not respond to his loving eagerness to climb on to my lap!’ (65-67).

Nārada told him, ‘You should not mourn for your son—whom the Lord looks after, O sovereign of the earth—from ignorance of the greatness of him whose glory will cover the worlds. Having done what would be impossible even for the Guardians of the worlds, your great son will be back before long, O King, enhancing your fame’ (68-69).

Maitreya said : The King eagerly drank in with his ears what the divine sage said. And taking little heed of the pomp and splendour of royalty, all his thoughts were for his son alone (70).

On the night he arrived in Madhuvana, he (Dhruva) fasted after taking his bath, and thus purified, he began worshipping the Lord with a collected mind, according to the sage's instructions. He spent the first month in the worship of Hari, eating once every three days wood apple and jujube plums, taking what was barely sufficient to sustain life. In the second month, the child lived on dry grass and fallen leaves and the like, taken once every six days, and worshipped the Lord That is everywhere. In the third month, which seemed to pass quickly for him, with his mind wholly concentrated on the illustrious Lord, he lived on a drink of water taken once every nine days. The fourth month, too, he passed in the contemplation of the Lord ensconced in the heart, living on air, inhaled but once in twelve days, having won complete control over the breath (71-75).

From the commencement of the fifth month, the prince, stopping the breath, stood on one foot, immovable as a post, contemplating the Brahma. Withdrawing the mind, the seat of the senses and their objects, from everything else, and contemplating the Lord's image in the heart, he saw nought else. As he contemplated the Brahma, the Support of Mahat and the rest, the Origin of Pradhāna and Purusha, the three worlds rocked. Where the King's little boy stood on one foot, the earth, pressed down by his big toe, dipped, as does the float to the right and the left, when the giant tusker it carries puts forward one leg and then another (76-79).

When he arrested the life-breath, stopping its passages, and fell into absorbed contemplation of the Lord, Who stands forth as the universe, identifying Him with his own Self, the worlds were oppressed, being unable to breathe, and they threw themselves on the mercy of Hari, along with their protectors. The gods prayed, 'We have never known, O Lord, this simultaneous obstruction of the breath in every creature, moving and stationary. Free us from this suffering; we throw ourselves on Thy mercy, O Lord and Saviour' (80-81).

The Lord thereupon told them reassuringly, 'Do not be afraid. Go back to your homes. I shall persuade the child, Uttānapāda's son, who has attained oneness with Me, to give up this formidable penance, the cause of your suffocation' (82).

CHAPTER IX

DHRUVA'S HYMN : THE LORD BLESSES HIM

Maitreya continued the tale : Thus freed from their fear, the gods made their prostrations to the Lord of the mighty strides and returned to heaven ; while He of the myriad heads went riding on Garuda to Madhuvana, eager to see His servant. When he, whose mind had been steadied by perfected yoga, saw Him appear like a streak of lightning in the core of his heart and then disappear as suddenly, he (opened his eyes and) found Him present outside in exactly the same form (1-2).

Beside himself with excitement at the sight, he bowed low and threw himself down on the ground like a stick, and then stood up ardently gazing at Him as if he would devour Him with his eyes, kiss Him and throw his arms about Him. Hari, seated in his heart as in all hearts, saw that the child standing before Him with folded hands was eager to utter His praises but did not know how, and out of His abounding grace, stroked him with the conch-shell on the cheek, that conch-shell which was of the very stuff of the Veda. When the gift of speech came upon him from the Lord, he, who had gained an insight into the nature of the Supreme Ātman and of the individual soul, was filled with the love that comes of devotion. He who was destined to gain the Dhruva (pole-star) for his abode, praised with assurance the Lord Whose glory envelops the worlds, in words that owed their inspiration to Him and were full of the import of the Veda (3-5).

Dhruva said : 'I make my salutations to Thee That rulest all hearts and commandest all powers. Entering into me, Thou hast roused by Thy puissance the power of speech, which was latent in me, as well as

quickened my hands and feet, my ears and my sense of touch, and all the other organs of sense. Having created Mahat and all else that there is by Thy power called Māyā, with its *guṇas* and infinite potentialities, Thou enterest them, and activating, as sole Ruler and Controller, the outward-ranging senses, the products of that Māyā, appearest as though Thou wert different in each of them, like the fire that burns in different logs of wood. The Creator, who besought Thy grace, O Supreme Lord, was able to see the world, like one who had waked from sleep, by virtue of the knowledge Thou didst grant him. How then can any man with a sense of gratitude forget Thy feet, which are the sanctuary of the liberated, O Friend of the stricken? Surely they are men whose intelligence is eclipsed by Thy Māyā, who worship Thee, the wishing-tree that can grant freedom from birth and death, for other things, such as the pleasures which the body, which is no better than a carcass, craves for, since these latter can be had even in hell! That supreme joy which men find in meditation on Thy lotus feet, O Lord, or in discourse on Thy devotees, cannot be had even in the Brahma, Which is the Bliss of the Self. How, then, could they know it who fall headlong from their heavenly mansions when they are hewed down by the sword of Death! May I be granted the blessing of close association with the supremely good men whose hearts are pure and who practise unremitting devotion to Thee, O Ananta, so that I may easily cross the terrible ocean of *samsāra*, with its endless sufferings, drunk on the nectar of the tale of Thy glorious qualities. Those who cultivate intimacy with the men whose hearts are greedy for the fragrance of Thy lotus feet, O Lord of the lotus navel, are wholly oblivious of the body, exceedingly dear as it may be, or of those other things, children, friends, home, wife and wealth, with which one is connected through the body. I know, O Lord That knowest no birth, only this gross (cosmic) body of Thine, wherein are to be found the lower creation, trees, birds, reptiles, Asuras, men, and so on, and an infinite variety of objects such as the gross and the subtle, and which is itself the product of many causes, the Mahat and the rest.

know not, O Lord, the Supreme and All-powerful God Who Transcends it, or That (Brahma Absolute) Which baffles speech. I make my submission to the Paramount Lord Who, at the end of a *Kalpa*, retracts the universe into Himself and lies down on the lap of Ananta, His companion, His eye turned inward; and in Whose ocean-like navel blooms the golden world-lotus, in the heart of which appears the effulgent One (Brahmā). Thou art different (from the *jīva*) in that Thou art eternally free, immaculate, omniscient. Thou art the Ātman That is pure consciousness, and immutable. Thou art the Primordial Lord, possessed of all glorious attributes, and paramount over the three *guṇas*. With Thy unbaffled intelligence, Thou art the Witness of all the different modes of the intellect in the creature. And Thou art, too, Viṣṇu Who, as Protector of the universe, is the Ruler of the sacrifice. I take refuge in the Brahma, in Which are always present the most diverse qualities, which being incompatible with each other, do not co-exist in the world, and in Which are manifest powers of every kind in due order as occasion demands; Which is the Origin of the universe, the One without a second, infinite, uncaused, immutable, and Bliss Absolute. The attainment of those lotus feet of Thine That art the embodiment of supreme bliss is without a doubt a felicity infinitely greater than any blessing for him who cleaves to Thee, firm in that conviction. But even while that is so, O Master mine, Thou, exalted Lord, dost extend Thy protecting hand over weak creatures like us in Thy solicitude for our eternal welfare, as the cow that has just calved feeds her young' (6-17).

Maitreya said: Thus extolled by the sagacious one, who had vowed himself to an exalted quest, the Lord, Who loves His humble servant, spoke to him approvingly. The Lord said: 'I know what you had resolved upon in your heart, O child of kings. And you shall have your wish, however difficult of attainment; and may all good attend you, who are steadfast in your vows. You shall have for your permanent abode, O Dhruva, that station of surpassing brilliance which no one else has occupied, and to which is tethered the zodiac, with

the planets, constellations and fixed stars, as cattle are to the central pole on the threshing floor; which outlasts those who live for the duration of a sub-Kalpa; and round which revolve, keeping it to the right, the stars representing Dharma, Agni, Kaśyapa, Sukra and the Seven Sages, as well as the fixed stars. When your father retires to the penitential woods, after handing over the kingdom to you, you shall rule over the earth for thirty-six thousand years, faithful to Dharma, and in the enjoyment of all your faculties with undiminished vigour. After the death of your brother Uttama, when out hunting, his mother will search for him in the forest, her mind wholly intent on him, and fall into a forest fire. Having worshipped Me, Whose cherished form is the sacrifice, by offering sacrifices with ample fees, and enjoyed every great blessing here, you shall in the end remember Me. Thereupon you shall go to My abode, which is adored by all the worlds, and is located above the Seven Sages, and from which no one who goes there ever returns' (18-25).

Maitreya continued: 'Then the Lord, who flies the Garuda flag, worshipped by him with all honour, conferred on him the freedom of His own place, and departed to His own abode, even as the child was looking. And he, too, having achieved his heart's desire, by worshipping the feet of Vishnu, returned to the city, not over-pleased with himself (26-27).

Vidura here put him a question. 'Having earned in a single birth, by worshipping the feet of Vishnu, the highest abode of Hari, which is beyond the reach of the man who is wanting in sincerity, why did he, who knew what was the supreme good, feel as though he had failed?' (28).

Maitreya answered: Because the verbal darts of his stepmother still rankled in his breast, he had not craved the boon of release, from the Lord Who dispenses liberation, and the thought filled him with grief. He exclaimed, 'Having gained in six months the shelter of His feet Whom Sunanda and others, vowed to eternal celibacy, came to know in His reality only by *samādhi* practised over many lives, I turned my back upon it, being obsessed by the sense of difference. Alas, look

at my ignorance and folly, unlucky creature that I am, in begging for perishable joys, after having attained the feet of Him who can sever the bonds of the transmigratory existence. Surely the gods fuddled my understanding, because they would have had to take a lower place, and they hated it; and so I, in my wickedness, disregarded Nārada's wholesome advice. Succumbing to the Lord's Māyā, I came to look upon my brother as the enemy, and my heart burned within me because I laboured under the sense of difference, even as the dreamer does, though in fact there is nothing that is other than one's Self. Futile like medicine for the dead is the thing I prayed for. Having propitiated by my austerities the Lord Who is not easily propitiated, I, ill-starred, prayed to Him, the Soul of the universe, Who can put an end to the bondage of *samsāra*, for those things that must prolong it. From Him who grants the Bliss of the Self, I, in my folly, asked for what would pamper my self-esteem, as if a pauper should beg chaff of an emperor' (29-35).

Here Maitreya (*addressing Vidura in an aside*) added: 'People like you, my son, who revel in the dust of Mukunda's lotus feet, want no wealth other than His service, being supremely content with what comes to them by chance'. And he then proceeded with the tale: Hearing that his child was coming, the King could not believe it, any more than one could believe that a man was returning from the dead; he thought, 'How could anything good happen to me, unlucky creature that I am?' But having faith in the words of the divine sage, he could not contain himself for joy, and he was so pleased with the messenger that he presented him with a valuable pearl necklace. Getting into a car drawn by splendid horses and embellished with gold, he quickly issued from the city, eager to feast his eyes on his son, accompanied by Brahmanas, elders, ministers and relations, to the booming of conch-shell and kettle-drum, the chanting of the Vedas and the playing of flutes. His queens Suniti and Surchi, adorned with gold jewellery, rode forth in a palanquin with Uttama by their side. Seeing him coming near the woods on the city outskirts, the King got off the chariot in all haste and ran

towards him, his heart tumultuous wiith love. Heaving a deep sigh of longing, he threw his arms about his son whose sins and bonds had all been removed by the touch of Vishnu's feet. Repeatedly kissing him on the crown of the head, he bathed his son with the cool and refreshing tears of joy, having realized his most deeply cherished wish (36-44).

Prostrating himself at his father's feet and receiving his loving greetings and blessings, he, foremost among the virtuous, made his bow to his mothers, who received him with glad welcome. Suruchi, raising the child when he prostrated himself at her feet, embraced him and said, in a voice choking with tears, 'May you live long !' To him who wins the grace of the exalted Lord Hari by such virtues as benevolence towards all creatures, all the world is drawn in reverence like water to low places. Uttama and Dhruva, their hearts violently agitated by love, their bodies thrilling in rapture as they embraced each other, were in a flood of tears. His mother Suniti, embracing the son who was dearer to her than life, was supremely content, body held against body, and shed her sorrows. From the breasts of a hero's mother, washed by her holy tears, flowed milk, O valiant one. And the people praised the queen, telling her, 'God be thanked that your son, dispeller of woes, has returned from his long absence ; he will protect the entire terrestrial globe. You have assuredly propitiated the Lord, Who abolishes the sorrows of the suppliant, and by meditating on Whom the heroes on the spiritual path have conquered death, the invincible' (45-52).

The King mounted on a female elephant Dhruva, whom the people thus made much of, along with his brother, and hearing their praises, joyously entered the city, where every doorway was adorned with shining arches shaped like the *makara*, with plantain trees carrying bunches of fruit, with betel vines similarly loaded, and with water-pots covered with the tender leaves of the mango, garlanded with scarves, flowers and ropes of pearl, and carrying lamps. That city was beautiful with its ramparts, gateways, and houses furnished in gold, and shining like the crests of splendid aerial

cars. Its cross-ways, highways, watch-towers and roads had been swept, sprinkled with sandal water and strewn with puffed grain, unbroken rice, flowers and fruits and food offerings. The women of the city, collected at different points on the way to receive Dhruva, presented him with white mustard seeds, unhusked barley, curds, water, *dūrva* grass, flowers and fruits; and they lovingly invoked the choicest blessings upon him. Hearing their sweet songs, he entered his father's mansion (53-59).

Cherished by his father, he lived like a god in heaven in that great mansion, studded with numberless gems, containing bedsteads of ivory with gold fittings, and beds white and soft as the froth on milk, priceless divans and utensils made of gold; its walls of crystal and emerald reflecting the light of jewelled lamps carried in the hands of women, who were jewels of their sex. Delightful were its pleasure-gardens, with their many different trees brought from the celestial world and filled with the warbling of birds in pairs and the hum of drunken bees. The sheets of water there had flights of steps made of cat's-eye; they were full of lotus, lily and *kumuda*, and crowded with flocks of swans and *kārandavas*, *chakravākas*, and *sāras* cranes (60-64).

The sage-king Uttānapāda, hearing and seeing the proofs of his son's glorious achievement, was overcome with wonder. When Dhruva had come of age, and the King found that he was esteemed by the different estates of the realm and loved by his subjects, he installed him as ruler. Realizing that he had grown old, and feeling a distaste for the pleasures of the world, the King retired to the penitential woods, his mind intent on the means of liberation (65-67).

CHAPTER X

DHRUVA WARS ON THE YAKSHAS

Maitreya said: Dhruva married Bhrami, the daughter of the patriarch Sisumāra, who bore him two sons, Kalpa and Vatsara. By his other wife, Ilā, the daughter of Vāyu, that man of immense strength had a son who

was named Utkala, and a jewel of a daughter. Uttama died unmarried, on the Himālaya, slain in the chase by a Yaksha stronger than himself; and his mother followed him. Dhruva, hearing of his brother's death, was overwhelmed by anger, indignation and grief. He mounted his ever-victorious chariot and went to the abode of the Guhyakas. Marching towards the North, the King beheld in a valley of the Himālaya the populous city of the Guhyakas, frequented by Rudra's followers. And he of the stout arm blew on his conch-shell, making the sky and the four quarters reverberate; it terrified the Yaksha women, whose eyes showed their fear, O Kshattā. Thereupon the powerful warrior chiefs of the demigods, who resented that blare, issued from the city, with uplifted weapons, to meet him. The mighty charioteer armed with the fierce bow hit them all simultaneously, as they came on, with three arrows apiece. With the arrows buried in their foreheads, they applauded that exploit of his, feeling that he had scored one upon them. But they would not put up with it, any more than a snake would allow itself to be trodden upon. They retaliated, all of them hitting him at once with twice as many arrows. And all the hundred and thirty thousand of them, resolved to pay him back, angrily showered on him, his driver and his chariot, a massive shower of iron clubs, swords, pikes, spears, axes, javelins, lances, *bhusundis* and arrows winged with a variety of feathers. Hidden under that heavy down-pour of weapons, the son of Uttānapāda was no more visible than a hill under torrential rains. The Siddhas, who were looking on from the sky, cried in dismay, 'The scion of the Manus has been slain, drowned in the sea of Yakshas like the sun.' (1-14).

Even as the Rākshasas were celebrating their victory on the battle-field with loud huzzas, his chariot rose into view again, like the sun from the mist. Twanging his celestial bow, to the deep distress of his adversaries, he smashed that flood of weapons with his shafts, as the wind scatters the serried clouds. The sharp arrows speeded from his bow cleft the armours of the Rākshasas and buried themselves in their bodies as Indra's thunderbolts split the mountains. The battle-field shone,

presenting a sight that must hearten the brave, carpeted as it was with the heads, with their lovely ear-pendants, the thighs like goldern palms, the arms with their beautiful armlets, the necklaces and shoulder-rings, the diadems and turbans fabulously rich, of those who had been cut to pieces by his *bhallas*. Such of the Rākshasa forces as had escaped death fled from the battle-field, most of them with limbs cut down by the arrows of the great Kshattriya, like the lords of the elephant herd with which a lion had made sport (15-20).

Though he could see no armed fighter on the battle-field, that best of men did not enter the city of the foe, much as he would have liked to see it. Telling the driver, 'One never knows what those who practise crafty ways are up to,' he of the splendid chariot was prepared for any surprise; he suspected that there might be a second attack. And then he heard a din like that made by the sea, and saw dust raised by high winds in all the quarters. In a second the entire sky was blotted out by an array of clouds from which lightning flashed and peals of frightful thunder crashed. They let down floods of gore, chyle, pus, ordure, urine and fat, and headless trunks fell in front of him, O faultless one. Then a mountain was seen in the sky from which fell on all sides maces, clubs, swords and pestles as well as stones. Serpents, whose breath was like the fire of lightning, vomited fire from their angry eyes and rushed upon him; and so did ruttish elephants, lions and tigers in large numbers. The ocean heaved and rose, frightful with its billows, and deluged the earth with a terrific din as at the time of the world's dissolution. The Yakshas, cruel in their ways, produced by resort to black magic these and many other such phenomena, which might have frightened the cowardly. The sages, who saw these formidable magic arts employed by the Yakshas against Dhruva, came there in a body and invoked blessings on him. The sages told him, 'O son of Uttānapāda, may the Lord of the Sārṅga bow, Who puts an end to the sufferings of the suppliant, destroy your foes; by just uttering His name or speaking it themselves, men easily cross the impassable ocean of death, my dear' (21-30).

CHAPTER XI

MANU INTERCEDES FOR THE YAKSHAS

Maitreya said : Hearing what the sages said, Dhruva purified himself with water, and fitted to his bow an arrow powered with the magical weapon of Narayana. Even as he was doing that, the delusive phantoms raised by the Yakshas were destroyed in a trice, O Vidura, like the products of nescience when one has found enlightenment. When he invoked the sage's weapon in the arrow fitted in the bow, there issued from it darts with golden shafts, speeded with the feathers of the swan, and they entered the enemy forces like peacocks flying into the forest with their raucous cries. The Yakshas, assailed on all sides by those sharp-edged arrows, rushed upon him in a fury with upraised weapons, like serpents with spread hoods attacking Suparṇa. Severing with his arrows their arms, thighs, necks and bellies, as they rushed to the attack, he despatched them to the highest of all worlds to which go the celibate ascetics, piercing through the orb of the sun (1-5).

Seeing those inoffensive Guhyakas slaughtered in their thousands by him of the splendid chariot, his grandfather Manu was moved to pity ; and he came to the son of Uttānapāda with the sages and spoke to him. Manu said : ' Enough of this sinful rage, my child, which has made you slaughter these inoffensive Yakshas ; such rage is the gateway to hell. This action of yours in launching on the massacre of the innocent demigods is unworthy of one of our race, for the good must condemn it. For the offence of one, you, my dear, have killed many, merely because of their connection with him ; loving your brother greatly, you were terribly upset. It is not the way of good men, who follow Hṛṣīkeśa, to inflict suffering on others, mistaking like animals the body for the soul. It was by worshipping Hari, the Home of all creatures, looking upon Him, Who is not easily propitiated, as the Soul that animates all beings, that you achieved that highest pinnacle, Vishnu's own place. How could you, whom Hari remembers with

love and who are acceptable to His devotees, bring yourself to do this reprehensible thing, having been taught the rule of life that the saintly follow? (6-12).

'The Lord, Who is the All-Soul, is pleased with him who shows forbearance, compassion, and friendliness towards others and conducts himself in the same uniform way with all beings. When the Lord is thus pleased, the *jīva* is freed from the dominion of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti and consequently of their product, the subtle body, and attains the Bliss that is the Brahma. Men and women are the product of the combination of the five elements, and they by mutual intercourse propagate other men and women. Thus the cycle of creation, preservation and destruction is set going, O King, by the disequilibrium of the *guṇas* brought about by the Lord's Māyā. The Lord, the All-Highest, Who is untouched by the *guṇas*, is but the First Cause, Whose mere presence keeps the world of cause and effect revolving, even as iron moves in the presence of the magnet. It is the Lord Himself, utilizing His divers powers, invoked and regulated by time, His own puissance, through the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas*, that creates, and yet remains a non-agent, even as He slays and yet is not a slayer. Who indeed can hope to penetrate the mystery of time, that activity of the Lord Who is supremely great ! The Lord Who knows no birth, no change and no waning, brings about the birth of one creature through another. He knows no end, but as time, has one creature destroyed by another and the latter by the hand of death. No one is a friend or an enemy to the Supreme Lord, Who, as death, enters into all creatures impartially; and in the wake of His swift march they follow helplessly, as dust follows the wind. The All-pervading Lord, Who knows neither increase nor decrease, being established in His own essential nature, prolongs or cuts short the life of the creature, who is dependent on his own past *karma*. Some speak of Him as *karma*, others as nature ; some as time, or as destiny, or as the sexual appetite. Who can know the designs, my son, of Him Who is beyond the reach of the senses and baffles all measure, being the Reservoir of many and various powers ? And, in any case,

how can one hope to know Him, to Whom he owes his own existence? (13-23).

'The retainers of the Lord of Wealth (Kubera) were not the slayers of your brother, my child; for it is the Lord that brings life, and it is He that sends death. He creates the universe, He sustains it, and then destroys it; and yet, because He is free from the ego, He remains unaffected by the *guṇas* or by actions. Invoking His own power of *Māyā*, He, the Soul in all creatures, Ruler and Protector, creates, sustains and destroys them. Therefore, my child, place your entire trust in Him, Who can confer eternal life as well as inflict death, Who is the Ruler of all destinies and the Support of the worlds, to Whom the Lords of creation render due service, as cattle held by the nose-cord do to their master. Wounded to the quick by the words of your stepmother, you, a five-year-old child, left your mother and went to the penitential woods, and there, directing your mind and senses away from the world and towards Him, propitiated the Lord by your penance and obtained a position which is the crown and summit of the three worlds. With the vision turned inward, my dear, you should look for Him, the Lord Who is seated firmly in the mind that has banished all enmity, Who is ever free from all limiting adjuncts, Who is One and imperishable, being the soul that is ever free, the ground on which appears this phantom world of diversity. Even as you do that, you should cultivate loving devotion to the exalted Lord Ananta, your own soul, Who is pure Bliss and in Whom are all powers harmoniously reconciled, and thus steadily rid yourself of the firmly rooted ignorance, which makes one think in terms of "me" and "mine". Restrain your anger, O King, which is the worst enemy of one's own true interest, by calling to mind the teaching of the *Sāstra* which you have repeatedly heard, even as men expel disease by medicine; and may all good attend you. The intelligent man who aspires to the state where fear is not known should not succumb to anger, which makes the world dread him who is possessed by it. By slaying the Yakshas in your anger against them under the impression that they killed your brother, you have shown dis-

respect to the Lord of Wealth, whom the Lord-of-the-hills looks upon as His brother. You should placate him without delay, my child, by making your obeisance to him and speaking him fair, least the anger of the mighty should overwhelm our race.' Having thus advised Dhruva, Manu received his respectful salutations ; and then the son of the Self-existent returned with the sages to his own abode (24-35).

CHAPTER XII

DHRUVA'S LONG REIGN AND ASCENSION

Maitreya said : Knowing that Dhruva had shed his anger and turned away from slaughter, Kubera, the honoured Lord of Wealth, appeared before him, with the Chāraṇas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras singing his praises. And he spoke kindly to Dhruva, who greeted him with folded hands. The Lord of Wealth said, 'I am pleased with you, O child of the Kshatriyas, blameless one, for discarding enmity, as your grandfather advised you, for it is exceedingly difficult to do that. You did not kill the Yakshas, neither did the Yakshas kill your brother ; for it is time that decrees the birth and death of all creatures. From ignorance, men confound the body with the Self, and in their intense absorption in it, come to entertain such false notions as "I" and "You", even as one does in regard to what one sees in a dream ; and this brings bondage and misery. Therefore, go your ways in peace, O Dhruva, and may all that is good attend you. Devote yourself to the worship of the Lord Who is not perceived by the senses but manifests Himself in all living beings. Looking on all creatures as your own self, propitiate Him, Who is both united with His power of Māyā constituted by the *guṇas*, and also untrammelled by it, in order to secure release from *samsāra* ; for He alone can put a term to bondage, and His feet are eminently worthy of devotion. Name freely, and without any hesitation or doubt, any boon that you would like to have of me, O royal son of Uttānapāda, for you would fully deserve it. We have

heard that you are very close indeed to the feet of the Lord of the lotus navel, my dear '. (1-7).

Maitreya said : Thus desired by Kubera to ask for any boon of his choice, Dhruva, the great devotee of the Lord, who was endowed with immense intelligence, prayed that his heart might ever be anchored securely in the recollection of Hari, by means of which one may without effort transcend the ignorance (the cause of *samsāra*) which it is so difficult to overcome. The son of Idavidā, greatly pleased, granted him his wish, and vanished from view even as he (Dhruva) was looking ; and the latter went back to his city. He worshipped, with sacrifices in which ample fees were paid, the Lord of the Sacrifice, Who is Himself the fine fruit of the rite consummated by the offering of appropriate substances for the propitiation of the gods through correct ritual, and Who is also the allotter of the fruits thereof. By means of unintermittent devotion to Achyuta, the Soul in all creatures, Who is at the same time free from all limiting adjuncts, he realized Him, the All-pervading Lord, as abiding in himself and in all beings (8-11).

His subjects looked up to him as to as father, because he was dowered with every virtue, and devoted to the Brahmanas, he loved the lowly and protected the norms of Dharma. He ruled the entire globe for thirty-six thousand years, dissipating the fruits of his meritorious works by enjoyment and his sins by self-denial and the discharge of strenuous vows. Having thus spent many a long year in a manner that subserved the three ends of life, the mighty man, who had his senses firmly under control, relinquished the throne in favour of his son. Looking upon the universe as superimposed on his Self by Māyā, like the dream city of the Gandharvas projected by nescience ; considering that time had already laid its clammy hand on his body, wife, children, friends and well-wishers, on his army and full treasury, his womenfolk and delightful pleasure-grounds and the entire sea-girt globe he ruled, he betook himself to Viśālā (Badari). There he bathed in the sacred waters, and sitting down with a purified heart, in the correct *yogic* posture, controlled the breath. Withdrawing his senses from the outside world, he concentrated his

mind on the physical universe (Viraj), identifying it with the Lord; and thus meditating on it, he passed into *samādhi* where the distinction between contemplator and the object of contemplation was blotted out, and he became oblivious of the Viraj. Thus, as he incessantly engaged in devotion to the Lord Hari, his eyes streaming with tears of bliss, his heart melting within him, and his body thrilling with joy, he wholly forgot himself, having relinquished his egoistic identification with the body (12-18).

One day he saw a splendid aerial car descend from the sky, lighting up the ten directions, like the full moon rising. And in it were two divine personages. They had four arms, and their hands rested on their maces; they were dark-complexioned and in the bloom of youth, with eyes like red lotuses; they were clad in splendid raiment, and wore diadem, pearl necklace, armlets, and lovely ear-pendants. Realizing that they were the messengers of the Lord of the glorious renown, he stood up, and forgetting to welcome them properly in his excitement at meeting the principal attendants of the Foe of Madhu, he merely bowed to them with folded hands, extolling the names of the Lord. Sunanda and Nanda, who enjoyed the esteem of the Lord of the lotus navel, approached him with a smile and spoke to him whose heart was intent on the feet of Krishna, and who stood before them with joined palms, head bowed in reverence. Sunanda and Nanda said, 'Listen attentively, O King, to what we have to say, and may all that is auspicious be yours. We, the personal attendants of the Lord of the Sārnga bow, the Protector of all the worlds, Whom you as a five-year-old child propitiated by your austerities, have come here to lead you to the Abode of the Lord. You have won that seat of Vishnu which is so much beyond the reach of men that the Seven Sages themselves cannot reach it, and can only look at it, where it stands far above them. Come and occupy that place, which the moon, the sun, the planets, the constellations and the fixed stars circumambulate; that supreme abode of Vishnu, good sir, which neither your fathers nor any one else has ever occupied before, and which is worthy of the homage of all the

worlds. Get into this splendid car, and may you live long ! The Lord Who is foremost among the illustrious has sent it '(19-27).

Maitreya went on : On hearing those words, dripping honey, of the foremost retainers of the Lord of Vaikuntha, he who was dear to Him of the mighty strides, bathed, performed the daily enjoined rites and then, adorning himself suitably, made his obeisance to the sages and got them to pronounce blessings on him. Walking round and worshipping that splendid car, and making his salutations to the Lord's attendants, he, whose body now shone with the lustre of gold, wished to occupy it. At that moment Uttānapāda's son saw Death, who had come there ; and placing his foot on Death's head, he ascended the marvellous car. Thereupon the kettle-drums struck up, and so did *mrdanga*, *paṇava* and the rest ; the foremost of the Gandharvas sang, and there fell showers of flowers. As he was about to ascend to heaven, Dhruva remembered his mother Suniti, and he said to himself, ' How can I go to heaven, which is so inaccessible, leaving her behind me to suffer in misery ? ' Divining his thoughts, the two celestials pointed out to him his lady mother going before him in a car (28-33).

Showered all along the way with flowers by the gods in their aerial cars singing his praises, he saw the planets in due order. Passing beyond the three worlds and the region of the Seven Sages in his aerial car, he whose place was secure for all time, reached that seat of Vishnu which was above them and which lit up the three worlds by its native splendour ; which those who had no compassion for their fellow-creatures never reached, but which is readily accessible to those who constantly do what is good and auspicious for others. That abode of Vishnu is easily won by those who look upon Achyuta as near and dear to them, who have achieved tranquillity and are pure of heart, who look upon no creature as different from themselves and are intent on making every one happy (34-37).

In this way, the stainless Dhruva, son of Uttānapāda, who was devoted to Krishna, became the crest-jewel of the three worlds, as it were. Attached to his

seat, the luminaries unwinkingly revolve like the team of oxen moving continuously round the central pole on the threshing floor, O son of the Kurus. Having seen for himself the magnificence of Dhruva, the blessed sage Nārada sang the following verses, accompanying himself on the *vīṇā*, at the sacrificial session conducted by the Prachetases. Nārada said, 'Having seen for themselves the fruits of the powerful austerities practised by the son of Sunīti, to whom her husband was her god, and knowing, too, the means by which they may be won, even those who are well-versed in the Veda are unable to compass them; how then could mere Kings? He who, just five years old, went to the penitential woods, his heart, pierced by the verbal darts of his stepmother, writhing within him, and followed my advice, won the heart of the Lord Who is invincible, but yields Himself to His devotees, overcome by their noble qualities. Can you think of any Kshatriya on earth who can so much as dream of ascending, even in the course of millennia, to that pinnacle which he, a boy of five or six, was able to attain by propitiating the Lord of Vaikuntha in a few days?' (38-43).

Maitreya concluded the story thus: I have now told you the entire story of Dhruva of the exalted renown. That story, which you wanted to hear, is prized greatly by all good men. It brings the hearer wealth, fame, length of life, religious merit and all prosperity, as well as heaven, and the attainment of the eternal state. It frees one from sin and ensures mental purity and is thus worthy of all praise. Repeatedly hearing with faith this tale of the doings of him who was dear to Achyuta, one comes to love the Lord with a great love, which will free him from all misery. Those who aspire to greatness should assiduously hear it. The hearer will develop character and all noble qualities. It brings power to those who seek power, and to the brave the world's regard. One should with all diligence recite this tremendous tale of the illustrious Dhruva at dawn and dusk in an assembly of Brahmanas; likewise on the full moon day; on the day of the black fortnight in which a single digit of the moon is visible; on the twelfth day of the fortnight; on the day when the constellation

Śravaṇa rules ; on the day in which there is a fraction of a *tithi* ; on the Vyatipāta day ; on the Sankramaṇa day ; or on the day sacred to the sun. He who puts his faith wholly in the feet of the Lord Who purifies, should recite it to those who hear with faith. He who hears this tale with no hankering for the fruits thereof, will find satisfaction in the Self and thus achieve the supreme end of life. The gods shower their blessings on him who, with a loving heart, befriends the lowly and imparts to the ignorant the knowledge of the Lord, which is immortality. And now, O first of the Kurus, I have told you the story of Dhruva who won spotless fame by his achievement when, as a five-year-old child, he threw away his playthings, left his mother's home and sought refuge in Vishnu (44-52).

CHAPTER XIII

THE MISDEEDS OF VENA

The Sūta said : Having heard the account given by Maitreya of Dhruva's ascension to Vaikuntha, Vidura's love for Adhokshaja became stronger than ever before, and he proceeded to question him again. Vidura asked : ' Who were those Prachetases you spoke of ? Whose sons were they, O you of the firm vows ? To what royal line did they belong ? Where did they hold the Sattrā ? I look upon Nārada as a great devotee of the Lord, for he had seen the Lord face to face, and it was he who expounded Kriyā-yoga, which lays down the mode of worshipping Hari. It was of the Lord Himself that Nārada must have spoken, his heart full of devotion, when those men who were faithful to their Dharma were sacrificing to Him, the Lord of the sacrifice. Be pleased to tell me, who am all attention, everything that the divine sage said then in praise of the Lord, O Brahman' (1-5).

Maitreya said : When his father had left for the penitential woods, Dhruva's son Utkala declined the pomp and pageant of empire and the imperial throne of his father. Born free from attachment to sense-pleasures, he eschewed all associations, and looking upon

all with an equal eye, he saw the Ātman in everything in the universe, and the universe in the Ātman. All impurities in his heart burnt out by the fire of incessant *yogic* practice, he realized that his Self was none other in essence than the Brahma, Which is Perfect Peace ; in Which all difference has disappeared ; Which is identical with Consciousness; Which is bliss in Its nature, and pervades all that is ; and he saw naught else. The ignorant saw him roaming about like a blind deaf-mute, who was rather mad, for his understanding was not as theirs. He looked like a fire whose flames had died down (6-10).

Concluding that he was a dolt, and not in his right senses, the elders of the family and the counsellors conferred, and made Vatsara, the younger son of Bhrami, King. Svarveethi, Vatsara's favourite wife, bore him six sons, Pushpārṇa, Tigmaketu, Isha, Ūrja, Vasu and Jaya. Pushpārṇa had two wives, Prabhā and Doshā. Prabhā bore him three sons, known as Prātar, Mādhyandina and Sāyam. Doshā had three sons, Pradosha, Nisitha and Vyushta. Vyushta begot on his wife Pushkarinī, a son named Sarvatejas ; the latter begot on his wife, Ākūti, a son named Chakshus, who ruled as Manu. Manu's queen Nadvalā gave birth to sons who were free from all blemish, Puru, Kutsa, Trita, Dyumna, Satyavān, Rta, Vrata, Agnishtoma, Atirātra, Pradyumna, Sibi and Ulmuka. Ulmuka begot on Pushkarinī six excellent sons—Anga, Sumanas, Khyāti, Kratu, Angiras and Gaya. Sunithā, Anga's wife, gave birth to the cruel Vena, disgusted with whose evil conduct the sage-king Anga went away from his city. When the sages, whose word could strike like the thunderbolt, cursed him (Vena), infuriated by his conduct, my dear, he died. The people were harried by thieves in the state of anarchy that followed. Thereupon the sages churned his (Vena's) right arm, and therefrom was born Prthu, with an *amsā* of Narayana, and he became the first overlord of the earth (11-20).

Vidura asked, ' How did that great-souled king, who was virtuous, good and devoted to Brahmanas, come to have a wicked son, who made him so unhappy that he fled the city ? And for what offence did the sages,

who know Dharma, lay a curse on the King, who is under an obligation to chastise the wicked? The ruler should not be slighted by his subjects, even if he offends, since by virtue of his power he exercises the authority of the Guardians of the worlds. Be pleased to tell me, your devoted listener, O Brahman, of the doings of Sunīthā's son; you are the first among those who know the past, the present and the future' (21-24).

Maitreya said: The sage-king Anga offered the great horse sacrifice; but the gods did not appear, when those who were well-versed in the Vedas summoned them. Astonished at this, the priests told the sacrificer, 'The gods do not accept the oblations tendered. No impurity vitiates them; they had been procured by you with all faith and zeal. And they were made in the fire with the chanting of *mantras* which have not lost their potency, by those who are strict in their vows. We have not been conscious of the slightest disrespect towards the gods, who witness all acts, which might possibly account for their not receiving their shares' (25-28).

Maitreya went on: Very unhappy at hearing what the Brahmanas said, the sacrificer broke his silence with the permission of the members of the assembly, to enquire into the cause. 'The gods do not come when called, nor do they receive the vessels containing the *soma* juice. The members of the assembly will please tell me what I have done wrong.' (29-30).

The members of the assembly answered him, 'Not even the slightest sin that you may have incurred in this life still remains (unexpiated), O King. But, for a man like you to be without issue, there should be some sin incurred in a former life. Therefore you should beget a good son, so that the gods might receive their offerings; and all will be well with you. The Lord, the Consumer-of-the-oblations, will grant you the son you long for, if propitiated with a sacrifice. If you pray for progeny to the Lord of the Sacrifice, Hari Himself, and invoke His presence, the gods will accept their shares. Whatever men seek of Him, that Hari grants them; men obtain of Him whatever they worship Him for' (31-34).

The priests, resolved to act on this view, offered the appropriate oblations in the fire for the propitiation of

Vishnu, Who enters into the sacrificial victim, so that the King might have progeny. From the fire rose a being clad in spotless raiment and wearing a garland of gold and carrying in his hand a golden vessel containing milk broth. With joined palms the King saluted him, and received the cooked food with the approval of the Brahmanas, and gladly smelt it; and the large-hearted man then gave it to his wife. His childless wife drank the broth, which would give her a man-child, and consorting with her husband conceived and in due course gave birth to a son (35-38).

From his childhood, he took after his maternal grandfather Mrtyu (Death), who was born of an *amśa* of Adharma; he was therefore addicted to unrighteousness. Armed with the bow, he was always in the forest hunting animals, and wickedly slaughtered defenceless creatures, and people cried in dismay at his approach, 'Here comes Vena!' While playing in the playgrounds, the cruel fellow caught hold of children of the same age and pitilessly strangled them. Seeing his son's blackguardly behaviour, the King tried to correct him by every kind of punishment, but when all his efforts failed, he was terribly unhappy. 'Most men who are childless must be so because they worshipped the Lord; they have been spared the insupportable agony that evil progeny can bring a man. What sensible man would prize those bonds imposed by delusion, which are known as children, seeing that they bring him only odium and sin, and earn for him the enmity of others and endless misery, making a hell of home! But an evil son is better, it seems to me, than a good one, who could be a source of affliction; for the former might be the cause of His getting away in disgust from a home that is a bed of thorns.' With such bitter thoughts, the sleepless King rose up at dead of night and departed unseen by anybody from that house where was to be found all magnificence, leaving behind the sleeping mother of Vena (39-47).

When they came to know that their King had gone away in disgust, his subjects, the chief priest, ministers, and his many friends were plunged in grief. And they searched for him all over the world, as imperfect yogis seek the Lord Who is hidden in their hearts. Baffled

in their efforts to trace the footsteps of the ruler of men, they returned to the city, and, making their reverence to the assembled sages, informed them with tears in their eyes of their master's disappearance, O son of the Puru race (48-49).

CHAPTER XIV

VENA SLAIN BY THE BRAHMANAS' ANGER

Maitreya said : Bhṛgu and the other sages, masters of the Vedic lore, being solicitous of the welfare of the world, realized that subjects without a king would be like sheep without a shepherd. So they sent for Vena's mother Sunīthā, O valiant one, and anointed Vena as King, though he was unacceptable to the estates of the realm. The moment they heard that Vena, who dealt out draconian punishment, had come to occupy the throne, all marauders went underground like rats terrified of the serpent. Seated on the throne, the possession of the power and opulence of the eight Guardians of the worlds went to his head, and in his arrogance and self-conceit he treated with contempt men who were great and good in every way. Blinded by pride, he transgressed all bounds, like the elephant that does not know the goad. He went round his kingdom in his chariot, making earth and heaven tremble, and proclaimed by beat of drum a general ban against Dharma: 'Let all the twice-born take notice, no sacrifice shall be offered anywhere, no gifts made, no oblations poured into the fire.' Seeing what the villainous Vena was doing and the calamity that it meant to the world, the sages were moved to pity. They met and discussed the situation at a sacrificial session, and they said, 'Alas, the world is in a sorry plight, caught between thief and king, like insects in a log when it burns at both ends. From fear of anarchy this man was made King, though unworthy. But he is now as much of a terror to the people. How is the general welfare to be safeguarded? Feeding milk to a serpent is to the undoing of the feeder. Vena, Sunīthā's son, a blackguard born, was made ruler (by us), and he harries the people. But let us try and per-

suade him to desist, so that his sins may not be on our heads. For, knowing Vena to be wicked in his ways, we made him King. If, in spite of our efforts, he does not heed our advice and desist from his evil deeds, we shall by our power burn him, who is already burnt by the world's imprecations' (1-13).

Having thus resolved, the sages approached Vena; hiding their anger and putting him in good humour with pleasant words, they spoke to him. The sages said: 'Please lend ear, great King, to our respectful representations. Doing as we advise would be conducive to length of life, prosperity, strength and fame, child: Dharma, faithfully followed in thought, word and deed and with intelligence, is rewarded by translation to the worlds where there is no sorrow; while those who are free from attachments are released from *samsāra*. You should not, O valiant one, fall down on your duty to protect your subjects. When that happens, the King is dislodged from his majesty. The ruler who protects the people against the depredations of bad officials, thieves, and the like, and contents himself with the levy of just dues from them, is happy both here and in the worlds to which he goes after death, O King. The exalted Lord, the Protector of all beings, the Soul of the universe, is supremely pleased, O fortunate one, with that king who is obedient to His law and in whose realm and city He, the Lord of the Sacrifice, is worshipped by the people in accordance with their *dharma* based on *varṇa* and *āśrama*. What is there that that man cannot get with whom He, the Overlord of the worlds, is pleased? For all the worlds and their guardian deities zealously pay Him tribute. You should, O King, be helpful and co-operative with your subjects, who wish to offer, in the interest of your prosperity, various sacrifices to the Lord, Who contains in Himself all the worlds, the gods, and the sacrifices, Who is bodied forth in the Vedas, Who is manifest as all substances, and may be won by the practice of austerities. Extremely pleased with the oblations made to them in the sacrifices offered by the Brahmanas in your realm, the gods, who are fractions of Hari, will dispense all blessings that are desired; you, O valiant one, should not show them disrespect' (14-22).

Vena told them, 'What fools you are to practise *adharma* in the complacent belief that it is *dharma* ! Ignoring me, your lawful spouse and provider, you run after a paramour. The silly fellows who show scant respect to God in the person of the King will meet with no good either here or hereafter. Who is the Lord of the Sacrifice, pray, on whom you dote thus, as wicked women do on their paramours, while looking upon their lawful husbands with aversion ? Vishnu, Virinchi, Giriśa, Indra, Vāyu, Yama, the sun-god, Parjanya (the god of rain), the Lord of wealth, the moon-god, the earth-goddess, the god of fire, and Varuṇa, the Lord of the waters—all these and other gods, who have the power to bless and to curse, live in the body of the King. The King is, thus, all the gods. Therefore, O Brahmanas, empty your minds of malice and propitiate me by appropriate acts, and pay me tribute. Who but me should receive the first fruits?' (23-28).

Maitreya said : Thus the perverse and wicked creature, who had fallen away from the path of virtue, refused to do what they begged of him, his good fortune having deserted him. Treated with scant courtesy by the conceited fool, who thought himself learned, the Brahmanas were indignant, O Vidura, at his spurning of their request, made in the interest of the world's welfare. 'Kill him ! Destroy him, who is so cruel by nature ! He will reduce the world to ashes without a doubt before long, if he goes on living. This evil-doer, who shamelessly reviles Vishnu, the Controller and Protector of the sacrifice, does not deserve to occupy a King's throne. Who would speak ill of Him, except the vicious Vena, who has obtained such splendid sovereignty by His grace ?' Thus resolved, the incensed sages destroyed with a mere snort Vena who had been as good as slain by his slandering of Vishnu. When the *rshis* had gone back to their hermit settlements, the sorrowing Sunīthā preserved her son's body by means of spells and other expedients (29-35).

Once the sages, having bathed in the waters of the Sarasvatī and made oblations in the fire, were seated on the bank, discoursing on holy things. Then they saw baleful portents calculated to strike terror into the hearts

of men, and they fell to wondering whether the people, being unprotected, might not be in for great suffering from the depredations of robbers. As they were thus reflecting, they saw a great cloud of dust raised by the lightning raids of plundering marauders. Even men¹ who were able to prevent it and realized that it would be wrong not to do so, made, however, no attempt to stop the despoilers, who were harrying and plundering the countryside which, with the King dead, was defenceless, and at the same time slaughtering each other; while the common people, beset by a multitude of robbers in a state of anarchy, were too weak to protect themselves. 'Even the Brahmana, who looks on all men with an equal eye and is at peace with all the world, will forfeit the fruit of his austerities, as water leaks from a broken vessel, should he look on with indifference at the suffering of the weak.' The sages, debating thus among themselves, came to the conclusion that the family of Anga, the sage-king, should not be allowed to become extinct, since the kings of this line, putting their faith in Keśava, had always displayed unfailing prowess. They churned the thigh of the dead King at a high speed. Thence emerged a dwarf, crow-black, with stunted limbs and short arms and feet; he was heavy-jowled and flat-nosed, and had blood-red eyes and red hair. He humbly asked them with bowed head, 'What shall I do?' 'Sit down,' they told him, and so he became known as Nishāda, my son. The descendants of him who by his birth took away the scarlet sins of Vena, came to be known as the Naishādas (hunters) who made their home in the mountains and the forests (36-46).

CHAPTER XV

VISHNU'S INCARNATION AS PRTHU

Maitreya said: When the Brahmanas churned again the arms of the childless King, there issued from them a male and a female. On seeing that pair, the sages, who were well-versed in the import of the word, This refers to Kshattriyas in particular, whose duty is to protect the defenceless against law-breakers.

Vedas, realized that in them was a fraction of the Lord, and they were delighted. The sages said, 'The male represents a fraction of the exalted Lord Vishnu's power as Protector of the universe, while the female has in her a fraction of Lakshmi, the Lord's inseparable consort. He will be the first of kings; spreading his fame over all the worlds, he will be celebrated by the name of Pṛthu, and be a mighty king. And she will be a woman of dazzling beauty, who adds lustre to all noble qualities and to the ornaments she wears. Known as Archis, she will marry Pṛthu himself. He is none other than an *aṁśa* of Hari, incarnate to protect the world. And she, being the Goddess Śrī, who is devoted to the Lord and will not be parted from Him, is now come into this world with Him' (1-6).

Maitreya went on with his narrative: The Brahmanas uttered his praises, the great Gandharvas sang, the Siddhas showered flowers, the celestial women danced. Conch-shell and *tūrya*, *mṛdanga* and kettle-drum boomed in heaven. The entire body of gods, sages and manes assembled at the place. Brahmā, the Mentor of the worlds, who came there with the great gods, saw on the right palm of the son of Vena the sign of the Wielder of the mace, and on the soles of his feet the lotus mark. He who bears on the palm the mark of the discus uncrossed by any other line is an *aṁśa* of the Supreme Lord (7-10).

The Brahmanas, who knew the Veda, made preparations for his consecration as King. From everywhere the people brought offerings of all the materials needed. Streams, seas, mountains, serpents, cows, birds, beasts, heaven and earth and all creatures brought their presents. Consecrated as a great King, he who was arrayed and adorned splendidly, shone like a second fire-god, with the beautifully decked Archis by his side. The god of wealth gave him, O valiant one, a throne of gold, Varuṇa an umbrella that shone like the moon, from which fell drops of water; Vāyu, a fan and a fly-whisk; Dharma a wreath that was fame materialized. Indra gave him a superb crown, and Yama the rod that puts down the wicked. Brahmā gave him an armour of the substance of the Veda, and the goddess of speech a splendid necklace of pearls. Hari bestowed on him His

discus Sudarśana, and His consort, inexhaustible opulence. Rudra gave him a sword with the figures of ten moons inscribed on the scabbard, and Ambikā a buckler with a hundred moons on it. Soma, the moon-god, gave him horses that were of the substance of nectar, and Tvashthā a lovely chariot. The god of fire brought him a bow made of the horns of the goat and the bull, the sun-god arrows that were as swift as his rays. The earth gave him a pair of magic sandals; the goddess of heaven sent a shower of flowers every day. The sojourners in the sky conferred on him proficiency in the arts of dance, song and music, and the power to become invisible. The sages pronounced unfailing blessings on him; the ocean gave him a conch from its bowels. The seas, the mountains and the rivers made a pathway for the chariot of the mighty one (11-20).

Chroniclers, bards and heralds wished to sing his praises. Seeing that that was their intention, the valiant Prthu, son of Vena, laughed and spoke to them in a voice deep as thunder. Prthu said: 'Ah! chronicler, and bard, and you, herald, my good friend, let me be praised when my virtues are known to all the world. On what ground can you praise me now? You should not make your words meaningless by devoting them to my praise. When, in the days to come, my qualities have won fame, you may extol them as you please, O charming speakers. When the illustrious Lord's glorious qualities call for praise, men of taste would hardly wish to hear panegyrics of meaner creatures, which must disgust them. Who that has the capacity to develop the qualities of greatness in himself, would be pleased to hear himself extolled for virtues which are not there? The fool who is taken in by the mocking assurance that he could, if he would, exhibit in course of time all such noble qualities, must surely be oblivious of the world's ridicule. Men who command every virtue and have won great fame, hate, because they are sensitive, being praised to their faces, as much as they would detest being praised for exploits of a base nature. We are still unknown to the world for any great achievements, O chronicler; how silly I should be to hear myself lauded!' (21-26).

CHAPTER XVI

PRTHU'S GREATNESS PROPHESED

Maitreya said : But, though he said so, the panegyrists, delighted with his nectar-sweet words, did sing his praises, prompted by the sages: ' We cannot adequately praise you, the Lord incarnate by His own Power of Māyā. Even the words of the lords of language (Brahmā and others), would fail to describe faithfully the prowess that you, born of the body of Vena, shall exhibit. Still, being in love with the tale of Pr̥thu, the partial incarnation of Hari, to hear of whose fame brings all blessings, we shall dwell on his praiseworthy deeds, under the inspiration of the sages, at whose bidding we extol them. Pr̥thu will be the greatest of the upholders of Dharma. He will lead the world in the practice of Dharma, protect its norms and punish those who violate them. In his own person he will exhibit at the appropriate time, and in just proportions, the divers functions of all the Guardians of the worlds, thus promoting the interests of both worlds. Shining like the sun equally upon all, he whose sovereign sway extends everywhere will collect tribute at the proper time and expend it when there is need. The son of Vena will put up with even the unbecoming importunities of those in distress, behaving like the earth in this respect, because he is ever compassionate towards them. When the god withholds rain, Hari incarnate as this King will readily come to the rescue of his subjects in their extremity, by doing Indra's work. He will rejoice the hearts of men with the sight of his face, which, with its loving look and beautiful bright smile, resembles the nectar-dropping moon. His movements will be unknown to others, his designs well-kept secrets ; his actions will keep the world guessing. His wealth will be carefully guarded. All greatness and every admirable virtue will be found in him. Like Varuṇa, he will remain a mystery to the world. He, the fire kindled from the firestick that was Vena, will be unapproachable and irresistible. However near a foe might get to him, he would be no more able to overcome him

than if he were at the end of the world. While he knows through his spies the thoughts and deeds of all men, he remains aloof and inperturbable, like Vāyu, the life-breath, the constant controller of the body. Following the example of Dharmarāja (Yama), he will not punish the man who is guiltless, even if he is an enemy's son, and he will punish his own son, if he is guilty. Pṛthu's writ will run as far as the Mānasa mountain, wherever in fact the sun shines. Since he will make the hearts of men glad by his pleasing acts, the people will call him 'Rājā' (King). He will be firm in his vows and true to his word. He will be devoted to Brahmanas and to the service of the old. He will be the refuge of all creatures, he will exalt them, and lavish his love on the humble. Towards women other than his spouses he will show a filial deference. He will love his wife as if she were a part of himself. He will befriend his subjects like a father, and will like a servant do the bidding of those who have mastered the Vedic teaching. He will be dear to all men like their own Self and bring endless joy to his friends. He will be deeply attached to those who have abjured all ties; and he will be like death in chastising the wicked (1-18).

'He is none other than the exalted Lord Himself, the Controller of the three *guṇas*, incarnate with a fraction of Himself; the immutable Ātman on Whom is projected by nescience that apparent multiplicity of the universe which the enlightened know to be meaningless. This peerless hero, this King of kings, will protect the entire orb of the earth up to the mountain of the rising sun. Riding in his victorious war-chariot, with his bow at the ready, he will go round it from right to left like the sun. And everywhere the kings will bring him tribute along with the Guardians of the worlds. Their womenfolk will speak his praises, knowing that this first of Kings is none other than the Wielder of the discus. "This emperor of the earth, who is the protector of all men, wishing to provide the means of subsistence for them, milked the earth, who took the form of a cow, having, like Indra, struck down the mountains with his bow's-end and levelled the earth; it was child's play to him. When he traversed the earth, twanging his bow, made

of the horns of the bull and the goat, which none could withstand in battle, he looked like the lion with its tail erect, and the evil-doers slunk out of sight wherever he appeared. He offered a hundred horse-sacrifices where the Sarasvatī takes its rise. When the last of the sacrifices was in progress, Indra carried off his horse. Waiting on the blessed sage, Sanatkumāra, in the woods adjoining his own palace, and propitiating him with all devotion, he obtained from him that pure knowledge which brings one realization of the Supreme Brahma". Prthu, whose mighty exploits will make his valour world-renowned, will hear, wherever he goes, such tales being told of himself. Having conquered the quarters and destroyed by his power those who were a thorn in the side of the world, he will be the ruler of the earth, his authority unchallenged anywhere. The chiefs of the gods and the Asuras will extol his greatness' (19-26).

CHAPTER XVII

PRTHU TAMES THE EARTH

Maitreya said: When they had thus praised him by describing his qualities and achievements, the exalted Lord incarnate as the son of Vena commended them and made them happy by the gift of whatever they desired. And with appropriate gifts he honoured the Brahmanas and other castes, his servants, ministers, chief priest, the people of the city and the countryside, the merchant guilds and his officials (1-2).

Vidura asked: 'Why did the earth, who takes many forms, appear as the cow which Prthu milked? Who was the calf, and what served as the milk pail? How did the naturally uneven earth get levelled by him? Why did the god (Indra) carry off his sacrificial horse? Having obtained both knowledge and enlightenment from the blessed Sanatkumāra, foremost of the knowers of the Brahma, what goal did the sage-king attain, O Brahman? Be pleased to relate to me, your disciple and the devotee of the Lord Who transcends the senses, the stories connected with this earlier incarnation of the

the exalted Lord Śrī Krishna, when He, as the son of Vena, milked the earth—those stories which proclaim His fame and delight the hearer and purify the heart,—as well as whatever else there might be to tell' (3-7).

The Sūta said: 'When he was thus questioned by Vidura about the doings of Vāsudeva, Maitreya was pleased. He praised him, and answered him thus. Maitreya said: When Prthu was consecrated as King by the Brahmanas and charged with the task of ruling the people, my friend, the subjects, who were lean with hunger because the earth produced no food, came to him and petitioned him, saying, "Consumed by hunger, like the tree by the fire that burns in its hollow, we throw ourselves on your mercy, O refuge of the stricken; for you have been appointed our Ruler, with the duty of providing us with the means of living. Be pleased, O King of Kings, to make all efforts to secure food for us, who are distraught by hunger, before we die of starvation. You are the protector of the world and its provider"' (8-11).

Maitreya went on: Hearing the pitiable lament of of his subjects, Prthu pondered long, and saw the cause of their suffering, O first of the Kurus. Being clear in his mind on this score, he, in his wrath against the earth, snatched his bow, like the Destroyer-of-the-fortresses, and fitted an arrow in it, taking aim at the earth. Seeing him with upraised weapon ready to strike, the earth quaked with fear, and taking the form of a cow fled, like a doe pursued by the hunter. But wherever she went, the son of Vena, his eyes blood-red in anger, was after her, with the shaft fixed in the bow. The earth-goddess fled in all directions, the cardinals and intermediate points, earth, heaven and upper air, but always found him in close pursuit, ready to strike. She found none to protect her against the son of Vena anywhere in the world, even as men find no protection against death. So she returned, terrified and distressed. And she appealed to the magnanimous man, praying, 'You, who know Dharma and take pity on those who are in dire straits, should protect me too, for you are vowed to protect all creatures. Why should you wish to kill helpless me, who have done no wrong ?

How can you, who are accounted well-versed in Dharma, kill a woman? Even ignorant creatures do not punish the weaker sex, guilty though they might be. How then could people like you, O King, who are compassionate, and who love the helpless? Having broken me up, the the ageless vessel on which the universe rides securely, how will you support yourself and your subjects in the water?' (12-21).

Prthu retorted, 'I shall destroy you, O earth, because you do not obey my orders. You get your share of the sacrificial oblations, but yield us no fruits. You eat up the grasses but give no milk. It is no wrong to punish such wickedness. Contemptuously disregarding me, you, stupid thing, do not release the seeds of herbage created by the Self-existent (Brahmā) in the far past, but keep them immured in yourself. I shall cut you up with my arrows and feed on your fat these people who are famished with hunger, and silence their cry of distress. It is no slaughter for kings to slay that vile thing, be it man, woman or neuter, who is puffed up with self-conceit and has no pity for the sufferings of others. With my arrows I will slice you into bits as small as sesamum seeds, you who have usurped the outward semblance of a cow, and are puffed up with wicked pride; and I shall support these subjects of mine by my *yogic* puissance' (22-27).

When he, who looked the very picture of wrath and was terrible as death, said this, the earth trembled and and abased herself before him, and spoke to him with joined palms. The earth said, 'Salutations to the Supreme Lord Who, by His own Māyā, assumes many a form, and appears as if He were constituted of the *guṇas*, but Who, by the experience of His own essential Self, is ever free from egoistic identification with the body, the senses and the gods, and from the ills that are due to that delusion. When He, the Lord ever-free, the Disposer of all destinies, Who made me their abode and support, Himself comes down upon me with upraised weapon to slay me, with whom shall I find refuge? The Lord, Who at the beginning created all things, stationary and moving, by His inscrutable power of Māyā, exercised in the interest of the *jīva*, is now vowed,

in the person of Pṛthu here, to protect them by the same Māyā. How, then, could He, with his devotion to Dharma, wish to slay me? Ah! how impossible it is for men, whose minds are distracted by His invincible Māyā, to divine the intentions of the Lord to Whom nothing is impossible, Who created the Creator and made him create the world, Who is one in essence, though seemingly many, thanks to His power of Māyā! Salutations to the Supreme Lord, the Disposer of all destinies, Who contrives the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe through His powers—the gross elements, the senses, the gods, the intellect and the ego—powers which are unlimited but controlled and held in check by His will. Thou Thyself, O Lord that knowest no birth, didst take the form of the Primordial Boar and lift me up from the nether regions and the waters of the ocean, to establish on me the universe of Thy creation, constituted of the elements, the senses and the internal organ. Thou, Who didst raise me up thus, are now incarnate as the King from the desire to protect the creatures who are lodged in me, on the surface of the waters, as in a vessel. And yet, with Thy dread arrows Thou wouldst destroy me over this matter of their food. Ordinary creatures like us, whose minds are confounded by the Māyā of the Supreme Lord, which creates the phenomenal world through the *guṇas*, can hardly hope to divine the purposes of the lordly beings who are masters over circumstance. I make my salutations to them who conduct themselves in a manner that would enhance the glory of the heroic souls who have won self-control”(29-36).

CHAPTER XVIII

PRṬHU REVIVES THE EARTH'S FERTILITY

Maitreya said: Having thus praised Pṛthu, whose lips still quivered in anger, the frightened earth steadied herself by an effort of will and appealed to him. ‘Restraining your anger, be pleased, my lord, to listen to

¹ The suggestion is that Pṛthu should remember that he owed it to himself to restrain his anger (S.)

my submission. The intelligent man takes what is good wherever he may find it, as the honey-bee does. The sages, who have realized the Truth, have known and practised various methods for attaining one's objectives in this world and in the next. Men of these latter times, following carefully and with faith those methods known to their forefathers, easily accomplish their purposes. But he who disregards such methods, even if he knows them, and employs others of his own devising will find that his efforts fail, however often he repeats them' (1-5).

'I found that all the vegetation that Brahmā brought into being in the far past, was being devoured by wicked and undisciplined men. Left unprotected and neglected by you, rulers and guardians of the world, which was overrun by thieves, I swallowed up all vegetation, intending to save it for the service of the sacrifice. All that vegetation has, by long lapse of time, become decayed within me. You should resuscitate it by the means laid down in the Śāstra. If you, O Lord of the mighty arm, protector of the people, want them to have food that they like and that will give them strength, arrange for the appropriate calf, milk pail and milkman. And in my love for the calf I shall yield milk in the form of all things desired. And level the earth, O mighty King, so that, even when the rains are over, the waters that the god sent down as showers may remain where they fall' (6-11).

Giving heed to this pleasing and wholesome counsel of the earth, the King milked all annuals and other plants in his cupped hands, employing Manu as the calf. It is thus that intelligent men take whatever is good in anything. Then others too milked the earth, which Prthu had made amenable, to get whatever they desired. The sages milked the goddess, O best of men, with Brhaspati for calf, receiving the pure milk of the Vedas in the milk pail of the senses. The gods, with Indra for calf, milked in a vessel of gold nectar, the drink that imparted mental power, vital energy and bodily strength. The Asuras, the sons of Diti and Danu, employing Prahlāda, the great Asura as calf, milked spirituous liquor in an iron vessel. The Gandharvas and Apsarases,

with Viśvāvasu for calf milked song, winning speech and beauty of form into a lotus cup. The blessed manes, who are propitiated by the *śrāddha* rite, scrupulously milked the food of the manes in a vessel of unburnt clay, with Aryamā for calf. Using Kapila as calf and the sky as milk pail, the Siddhas milked the eightfold *yogic* powers, which enable one to do whatever one wills, and the Vidyādhara the skills that are special to them (like moving in the air.) Other adepts of the magic arts, using Maya as calf, milked the powers of those who can at will do such miraculous things as instantly vanishing from sight. The Yakshas, Rākshasas, spirits, and ghouls, feeding on flesh, milked the blood that intoxicates them, in a skull, using the Lord of the elementals (Rudra) for calf. Likewise snakes, scorpions and other biting and stinging insects and the hooded serpents used Takshaka as calf and milked poison into their own mouths. The beasts, with the bull (of Siva) for calf, milked all grasses, using the forest as the milk pail. The fanged carnivori, with the lion as calf, milked flesh into the carcasses of their victims. The birds, employing Suparṇa as calf, milked the moving (worms etc.) and the non-moving (fruits and so on). The forest-trees, with the banyan for calf, milked different juices. The mountains, with Himavān for calf, milked the various kinds of ores on their own flanks. In this way all classes of beings, using the chief among them as calf, secured, each in its own vessel, its distinctive pabulum from the earth, which, complaisant to the wishes of Pṛthu, yielded everything that anybody asked for. Thus Pṛthu and other consumers of food milked from the earth their different kinds of nutriment, the difference being due to the different calves, milking vessels and milkers employed, O first of the Kurus (12-27).

Pleased with the earth for her yielding all that the heart desired, King Pṛthu lovingly adopted her as his daughter, having long wished for a daughter. Smashing the mountain-peaks with his bow's-end, the all-powerful Pṛthu, son of Vena, the King of Kings, made the entire earth more or less level ground. Then the exalted Lord, the son of Vena, as the father and provider of his people, established different settlements for human

habitation suitably at various places all over the earth. These included villages, towns, cities, different kinds of fortified places, cowherd settlements, cowsteads, mining camps with cantonments, agrarian colonies and mountain villages. Before Prthu's time there was no such thing as town or village. After they came into existence, people lived wherever they liked carefree (28-32).

CHAPTER XIX

INDRA OBSTRUCTS PRTHU'S SACRIFICE

Maitreya went on : Then the King entered on vows for offering a hundred horse-sacrifices in Brahmāvarta, the home of Manu, where the Sarasvatī flows in an easterly direction. The great Indra, who had offered a hundred sacrifices, felt that the great sacrificial festival of Prthu would eclipse the splendour of his own achievement, and to him the idea was intolerable. For the exalted Lord Hari, the Deity of the Sacrifice, paramount over all powers, the Soul and Inner Ruler of the universe, was present at Prthu's sacrifice and was plainly seen by all present. He was accompanied by Brahmā and Śarva and the other Guardians of the worlds and their followers ; and the Gandharvas, the bands of Apsarases and the sages sang His praises. Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Dānavas, Guhyakas and the rest, and Sunanda, Nanda and all the other personal attendants of Hari waited on Him, as well as Kapila, Nārada, Datta, the master-yogis, Sanaka and others, and other devotees of the Lord, all eager to serve Him. At that sacrifice the earth yielded not only milk for oblations but everything that the sacrificer desired, like a wishing tree, O son of the Bharatas. The streams ran with all kinds of juices, and with milk, curds, buttermilk and ghee ; the trees, of an immense size, yielded abundantly, and dripped honey. The seas threw up heaps of gems, the mountains yielded the four kinds of food, and all the worlds and their rulers brought their different presents (1-9).

The powerful Indra, being jealous of this exaltation of Prthu, who looked up to the Lord That is beyond the

reach of the senses as his Protector, interposed obstacles. When the son of Vena was worshipping the Lord of the sacrifice with the last of the horse sacrifices, the jealous Indra, remaining hidden from view, carried off the horse. As he was hurriedly escaping through the sky, the venerable Atri saw him, who had put on, like an armour, the disguise of a heretic, which misleads people into thinking that what is really Adharma is perfectly lawful. At Atri's instance, the son of Pṛthu, a great chariot warrior, angrily set out in pursuit, shouting, 'Stop thief !' But when he set eyes on him, who had disguised himself with matted locks and ash-covered body, he refrained from letting fly at him, thinking that it must be Dharma who had assumed that form. When he returned without killing him, Atri again urged him to slay him, saying, 'Kill Mahendra, the vile celestial, who is ruining the sacrifice, my son !' Thus advised, Vena's grandson pursued him with redoubled fury, as he fled through the sky, even as the king of the eagles had pursued Ravana. Thereupon, giving up alike his disguise and the horse, the ruler of heaven vanished ; and the valiant man returned with the horse to his father's sacrifice. Seeing that wonderful exploit of his, the great sages gave him a new name and called him Vijitāśva, noble sir (10-18).

Then under cover of an intense darkness, which he caused, the clever Indra again took the horse, with its golden halter, away from the sacrificial post with the wooden ring on top. Atri pointed him out as he was hurriedly getting away through the air. But, seeing him (Indra) carrying the beggar's bowl and the staff with a skull-head, the valiant man did not pursue him. However, at Atri's insistence, he was preparing to shoot him down, when the ruler of heaven relinquished both his disguise and the horse, but remained hidden where he was. The heroic warrior recovered the horse and returned to his father's sacrifice. Stupid men came to adopt that ignoble disguise which Indra had assumed. All those disguises that Indra had resorted to from the desire to carry off the horse, were so many 'khandas' of sin ; by 'khanda' a sign or mark is meant here. To the disguises which Indra had assumed and

cast aside from the desire to steal the sacrificial steed, men's minds are drawn by the erroneous belief that they are sanctioned by Dharma, since they ape the appearance of what is lawful, and are adopted by heretical sects such as those that go about naked, or wearing a red cloth, and are artfully commended by plausible reasoning (19-25).

Seeing what Indra was bent upon doing, the glorious Lord Pṛthu of the extraordinary prowess was indignant, and raising his bow he fitted a shaft in it to strike Indra. The priests, judging from his forbidding appearance and impetuous swiftness, that he was bent upon destroying Śakra, dissuaded him saying, 'O you of the mighty intellect, it is not proper on this occasion for you to kill anything other than the prescribed sacrificial victim. But we shall, with spells that have lost none of their efficacy, compel the presence of Marutvān (Indra), whose splendour has been eclipsed by yours, and who wants to frustrate your object, and offer him up as an oblation in the fire, since he wants to do you an ill turn.' Giving the sacrificer this assurance, the priests angrily took the ladle in their hands and began making oblations in the fire; when the Self-existent Lord (Brahmā) came there and stopped them. He told them, 'You should not, by offering him up as a sacrifice, slay Indra who, known by the name of Yajna, is an incarnation of the Lord, Who takes manifold forms as the gods propitiated by the sacrifice. Reflect, O Brahmanas, on this gross violation of Dharma practised by Indra in his desire to ruin the sacrificial rite of the King. Let this rite of Pṛthu of the immense renown be one that is one short of a hundred sacrifices. And what have you, O King, to gain by sacrifices scrupulously offered? You know the worth of liberation and the means to attain it. You should not be angry with the great Indra, for he is your very Self; for the two of you are — God bless you! — in truth different forms of the illustrious Lord. Listen carefully to what I shall say, great King. Do not vex yourself over what has happened; since the mind of the man who is always moody, racking his brains as to how best he can achieve what destiny has already destroyed, falls a prey to anger and delusion. Stop this sacrifice; for

the gods are stubborn, and great violence has been done to Dharma by the heresies which Indra has propagated. Look at these people who are being misled by the beguiling heresies which Indra introduced when he set himself against your sacrifice and stole your horse. To resuscitate the Dharmas of the people which have their sanction in the Śāstras, and which had been superseded by Vena's transgressions, you, a partial incarnation of Vishnu, were born into this world as Vena's son. Think carefully, O mighty ruler of the people, of the genesis of this world, and fulfil the purposes of the patriarchs ; you must root out the rampant heresies, the creation of Indra's illusive tricks and the parent of unrighteousness' (26-38.)

Maitreya said : Thus enlightened by the Mentor of the worlds, the King did as he was told ; he made peace with Indra and became friendly with him. Prthu of the mighty exploits then took the lustral bath, and the bountiful gods, whom he had propitiated with the sacrifice, granted him boons. The Brahmanas, whose blessings are always fulfilled, were pleased with his faith and zeal. Duly honoured by him, they received their fees, and they blessed that first of kings, O Kshattā, saying, ' All those whom you had invited—the gods, the manes, the sages and men—have attended, O you of the mighty arm ; and you have gratified them with your gifts and with the civilities you have shown them' (39-42.)

CHAPTER XX

VISHNU BLESSES PRTHU

Maitreya said : The exalted and omnipresent Lord Vishnu, the Deity of the sacrifice and Consumer of oblations, was pleased with the sacrifices offered, and He appeared before him (Prthu) with Indra and spoke to him. The Lord said : ' Indra here was responsible for frustrating your vow to offer a hundred sacrifices. He seeks your pardon, excuse him. The noblest of men, those who are good and wise, bear no ill-will towards any creature, O King, because they do not mistake the body for the soul. If men like you should be taken

in by the Lord's Māyā, vain indeed would be the long years they had spent in devout pupilage under those that were old in age and wisdom; because the man who has won enlightenment, realizing that the body is the outcome of ignorance, desire and action, feels no attachment to it. And what man of sense, who is free from attachment to the body, would have a possessive attitude towards those things that have been produced by the body, such as his home, children or wealth? The Ātman is different from the body, being always one and unchanged, immaculate, self-luminous, and unconditioned by the *gunas*, while it is the ground of their manifestation, all-pervasive and unconfined; it is the Witness, and it is not ruled by another Ātman. The man who knows that the Ātman is of this nature and that it is lodged in the body, is not affected by the vicissitudes the body, the product of Prakṛti, is subject to, in spite of his being in the body, because he is securely established in Me. If a man worships Me constantly, disinterestedly and with faith, by the scrupulous performance of his ordained duties, his mind gradually becomes pure, O King. When the mind has become pure, sense-pleasures lose their attraction for him, he attains true insight and finds that peace which is oneness with the Brahma, My own state of perfect equipoise. The man who knows that the Ātman is immutable, and while controlling the body, the senses and the mind, remains totally unconcerned and aloof, has attained the Supreme Good. The wise men who have given their unshakable love to Me are not affected one way or other by good fortune or misfortune; for the transmigratory flux affects only the subtle body, which is different from the Ātman, being composed of the elements, the senses, the gods and the reflection of the 'chit' in the mind. Conducting yourself with equanimity in joy and sorrow alike, treating every one—superior, inferior or equal—in the same way, and keeping the senses and the mind under control, protect all the world, O valiant one, using the resources that I have provided. It is the protection that the King accords his subjects that will stand him in good stead in the next world, for he will get the benefit of one-sixth of the religious merit won by his subjects. If, on the

contrary he, having collected taxes, fails to protect them, his religious merit will go to his subjects, and he will be saddled with their sins. Practising disinterestedly the ordained duties which worthy Brahmanas esteem and which are hallowed by tradition, and pursuing the other two ends of life (Artha and Kāma) without detriment to them, protect your subjects and win their love, and you will soon see the perfected yogis, who will seek you out in your home. Ask of Me any boon you like, O King ; that I shall grant you, because you have won Me over by your exemplary conduct and your many virtues. My favour is not easily gained by the offering of sacrifices, the practice of austerities or by yoga. I abide only in the hearts of men who have attained equipoise' (1-16).

Maitreya said : Thus instructed by Hari, the Mentor of the worlds, Whose power prevails, he who had gained control over all mankind, received His command with bowed head. Embracing Indra, as he, ashamed of what he had done, was about to touch his feet, he gave up all feelings of enmity towards him. The exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, was worshipped with all honours by Prthu, who clasped His feet in an access of love that welled up from the heart. Though ready to depart, the Lord of the lotus eyes, the bosom friend of the good, lingered for a while, held by His gracious kindness to him. He, the first King, as he stood with folded hands before Hari, could not look at Him for the tears that filled his eyes ; his throat choked by tears, he said no word but embraced Him in his heart and enshrined Him there. Then, wiping his eyes and looking, with eyes that would not be satisfied, at the Lord Who stood before him, His feet touching the ground, one hand lightly resting on the lofty shoulder of the foe of the serpents, he addressed Him (17-22).

Prthu said : 'How can any intelligent man ask of Thee, Lord Paramount over all granters of boons, for blessings which are desired by those who are in love with the body and which are available even to those fallen into births which are no better than hell ? And so I shall not ask for such boons, O Lord that dispensest liberation. I shall not desire even liberation, if in that

state one cannot have the heady wine of Thy lotus feet, flowing from the hearts of the supremely great (Thy devotees), through their mouths. Give me ten thousand ears with which I may imbibe it ; that is the boon I ask of Thee. The wind that carries a particle of that nectar from Thy lotus feet, as it issues through the mouths of Thy devotees, O illustrious Lord, brings recollection of the Truth of the Self to those unfulfilled yogis who had forgotten it ; and so we have no use for boons. O Lord, to hear of Whom brings all good with it, how could any man who has an instinct for what is good, and is not a mere animal, leave off listening to the glorious tale of Thy sanctifying fame, when once he has, by chance, heard it acclaimed where noble souls foregathered—that tale which the Goddess Śrī delights in perpetually from the desire to be able to command all the supreme ends of life ? Therefore I shall strive—as whole-hearted in my longing to attain Thee as the Goddess Śrī herself, with the lotus in her hand—to worship Thee That art supreme over all the great powers there are, and the Home of all the virtues. Contending as rivals for the favour of the same Lord, with the minds of both of us incessantly haunting Thy feet, might not ill-feeling grow up between us ? I might quite possibly fall out with the Mother of the universe by aspiring to the service that she has marked out for her own ! But Thou, O Master of the worlds, makest much of even such trivial merit as there may be in the humble, in Thy loving compassion for them ; whereas, delighting as Thou dost in Thine essential Self, what need hast Thou of her ? That is why the saintly go on worshipping Thee—against Whom the play of the *guṇas* of Māyā is unavailing—even after they have attained enlightenment. I can think of no other reason for their doing this except that they want to keep the memory of Thy feet fresh in their hearts. From Thy asking Me, Thy devotee, to prefer a boon, I can only conclude that Thy words aim at beguiling the world of men. If men were not bound, as with a cord, by Thy word (the Veda), is it conceivable that they would go on doing *karmas*, their understanding confounded ? It is surely by Thy Māyā, O Lord, that ignorant men are persuaded to look upon themselves as distinct from

Thee That art the One Abiding Reality, and therefore hanker after other things. Thou shouldst, of Thine own accord, do what is good for us, as a father would for his children' (22-31).

Maitreya said : 'Thus extolled by the first of Kings, He who sees into all hearts told him, 'You shall be ever devoted to Me, O King. You are fortunate in having cultivated such feelings towards Me, which enable one to free oneself from the sway of My Māyā, which is otherwise insuperable. Therefore, O ruler of men, do as I have told you, keeping a watchful eye on your own conduct. Men who observe My commandments never meet with anything but good' (32-33).

Maitreya went on : Having thus applauded the pregnant words of the sage-king, the son of Vena, and received his worship, Achyuta blessed him, and made up His mind to leave. The gods, the sages, the manes, the Gandharvas, the Siddhas, the Chāraṇas, the Nāgas, the Kinnaras and the Apsarases, men and birds and all other creatures, then departed, pleased with the King who, looking upon them as no different from the Lord of the Sacrifice Himself, thanked them and made them presents and joined his hands in salutation to them. And those who had come in the train of the Lord of Vaikuntha also left. And the Lord Achyuta returned to His own abode, ravishing the minds of the King and his Purohit, as it seemed. And the King, having made his prostrations to Him, the God of gods, Who had shown Himself and then disappeared from view, and Who is in truth beyond the reach of the senses, went back to his city (34-38).

CHAPTER XXI

PRTHU INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE IN DHARMA

Maitreya said : The city was decorated everywhere against his coming, festooned with ropes of pearl, adorned with garlands of flowers and fine linen ; golden archways were set up and exceedingly fragrant incense burnt. Its thoroughfares, cross-ways and roads were well-watered with water mixed with sandal and aloes,

and strewn with flowers, unbroken rice, fruits, young blades of barley and puffed grain, and they were illuminated with many lamps. Plantains with bunches of fruit and flower, and areca palms similarly laden were set up, and festoons of tender leaves hung. His subjects advanced to receive him, carrying rows of lamps and other auspicious things; and with them went lovely young maids with sparkling ear-pendants. To the booming of conch-shell and kettle-drum and the chanting of the Vedas by the priests, the valiant one, who was totally devoid of egotism, entered his home, hearing his praises sung. He of the immense renown, thus honoured by the townsfolk and the people of the countryside all along the way, was greatly pleased, and he gratified them by granting whatever they craved of him. He, who by his virtues excelled the highest, and whose conduct was exemplary, did many a mighty deed and ruled his kingdom, which covered the entire earth; and leaving his spotless fame behind, he ascended to the supreme abode of the Lord (1-7).

The Sūta said: When the sage Kaushāravi thus extolled the fame of the first King, which his many virtues had gone to swell and which was exalted by the good, Kshattā, the great devotee, paid him reverence and questioned him, O President of the assembly. Vidura asked, 'When Prthu had been crowned King of his people by the Brahmanas, receiving many presents from the gods, what did he, whose arms infused with the power of Vishnu had milked the earth, proceed to do? What intelligent man will not wish to hear of the fame of him, the benefits of whose great exploit all kings, all the worlds, and their Guardians enjoy even to this day? Therefore tell me of his flawless deeds' (8-10).

Maitreya answered: Living in the region between the Gangā and the Yamunā, he enjoyed the fruits of *karmas* that had ripened, from the desire to dissipate his accumulated merits. His authority was absolute and unquestioned, and he wielded the rod of punishment in all the seven island-continent, the Brahmanas and those who were the spiritual sons of Achyuta being alone exempt. Once he took the vows for a great Sattrā sacrifice, which attracted a huge

assembly of the gods as well as Brahmarshis and royal sages, O best of men. When all who were worthy of honour had been properly honoured, he stood up in the midst of the assembly, like the moon among the stars. He was tall and exceedingly fair, with long and sturdy arms, eyes red as the lotus, a shapely nose, well padded shoulders, a friendly, cheerful mien, and a smile on the face which showed the beautiful teeth. His spacious chest exuded strength. He had massive hips, and a belly comely with its folds, like the leaf of the peepul. A man of tremendous energy, he had a whirlpool-like navel and thighs that shone like gold, and high shanks. His fine and glossy hair was black and fell in curls, and his neck was like the conch-shell. He was clad in a pair of rare and fine clothes. He had laid aside his ornaments, because he was under vows, and the beauty of every limb stood out the more prominently. Gracious in his aspect, he was covered with the skin of the black buck, and wore a ring of *kūśa* grass. He had finished the prescribed rites. Looking around with eyes that were friendly and refreshing in their coolness like stars, the sovereign of the earth spoke as follows, delighting the assembly. In accents that fell pleasantly on the ear, and employing a diction that was picturesque, simple and pure and yet conveying a great depth of meaning, he spoke deliberately and without hurry in the manner of one who was relating for the benefit of others the lessons of his own experience (11-20).

The King said : ' May the members of the assembly, the good men gathered here, be pleased to listen. Men who are anxious to know Dharma truly should place before men of virtue their own ideas on the subject. I have been appointed Ruler and correcter of my people, to protect them, provide them with the means of living, and to make them persevere in the faithful discharge of their different functions. May those worlds where all wishes are fulfilled be mine, which those who understand the Vedas say accrue to him who propitiates the Supreme Lord, the Witness of all men's past *karmas*, by faithfully doing his duty by his people as their ruler. The King who makes levies on his subjects without instructing them in their *dharma*s, takes their sins upon

himself and forfeits his good fortune. Therefore, my people, practise without cavil your own duties, dedicating the fruits to Adhokshaja, so that they may stand your King in good stead in the after-life. Doing this, you will be conferring a great blessing on me. Be pleased, O immaculate gods, manes and sages (assembled here), to endorse this; the fruits obtained in the other world by such fidelity to one's *dharma* accrue equally to the man who practises it, to him who instructs him in this behalf and to those who approve of it (20-26).

'I may say, for the information of some exceedingly honourable men who are gathered here, that there are those who hold that there is a God Who deals out the fruits of the sacrifice. For it is a fact that there are to be found both in this world and the next places where the most brilliant pleasures may be found, (as well as beings with exceptional merits). Manu, Uttānapāda, Dhruva, lord of the earth, Priyavrata, the sage-king Anga, my grandfather, and many others like them, as well as Aja and Bhava, Prahlāda and Bali—indeed, all except the grandson of Mrtyu, and those like him, whose understanding of Dharma was confounded and who were therefore to be pitied—were convinced that there is a place in the scheme of things for the Wielder of the Mace, that He alone can dispense the fruits of *karma*; arguing from the fact that the three ends of life, as well as heaven or hell and liberation, are largely within the competence of the same Power to give or withhold, and He needs neither ally nor support. The delight that a man feels in service at His feet grows every day and dispels the accumulated taint of many births, which obscures the intelligence of men who suffer the travails of *samsāra*; even as does the stream that takes its rise from His big toe. His mind thus freed of all taint, he is filled with the power of Self-realization achieved through non-attachment, and living in the shadow of His feet, is no more caught up in the transmigratory life with its endless misery. It is Him, Whose feet grant all that the heart desires, that you should worship with sincerity, following your proper vocations, expressing your devotion in thought, word and deed, and scrupulously performing the enjoined *karmas*, in the confident faith that whatever you wish and are competent for you will attain (27-33).

'The Lord Himself, while in essence pure Consciousness, and free from all attributes, is bodied forth, in the Sāstra that teaches the way of works, as the sacrifice, which has many adjuncts, being compassed by the coming together of many different substances, their qualities, the mode of preparing them, the *mantras* used, the contribution to the result made by the ancillary rites, the object with which the sacrifice is offered, the specific virtue of the substances used, and the name given to the sacrifice. The All-pervading Lord Who is Supreme Bliss reveals Himself in the body, which is the product of Pradhāna, time, the residual impressions of past *karma* and of accumulated merits or demerits; His blissful nature being manifested through the mind that reflects experience, as the fruit of the *karma* (sacrifice) done, even as fire takes the appearance of the log that it burns (34-35).

'Ah ! what a great blessing it is that these subjects of mine, who are firm in their vows, confer on me by constantly worshipping in this world Hari, the Mentor of the worlds and the Lord paramount over the gods who receive oblations, by faithfully performing their ordained duties! May the power wielded by princes, by virtue of their immense opulence, be never directed against the Brahmanas who are devoted wholly to the Invincible Lord, and who shine like blazing fire by their forbearance, austerities and learning. It was by constantly making His obeisance at the feet of the Brahmanas, to whom He is devoted, that the primordial Lord Hari, first among the supremely great Powers, obtained Lakshmi, who is ever inseparable from Him, and the fame that sanctifies the worlds. Since the Lord, Who dwells in the hearts of all creatures, Who is self-dependent and the Lover of Brahmanas, is immensely pleased by service to the Brahmanas, let all those who are humble of heart and zealous in the practice of the *dharma*s that lead to Him, cleave to them with might and main. When, by constant association with and devout service to the Brahmanas, the minds of men may quickly achieve serenity, and thus bring them that peace (liberation) which passes understanding, could there be a worthier mouth (than the Brahmana) for the oblations intended for the gods ? (36-40).

'The Lord Ananta Himself, the Inner Ruler and the Goal of the Paramahamsas, does not accept with as much relish what is offered in the fire, a lifeless thing, as He does the food given with faith to Brahmanas in honour of the gods, by those who know the truth about Him. O noble ones, may it be given to me to wear, to the end of my days, on the top of my crown the pollen from the lotus feet of those who are distinguished by faith, austerities, the doing of praiseworthy deeds and the avoidance of unworthy ones, by sparing speech, self-control and steadiness of mind, and who maintain the practice of reciting the primordial and pure Veda in which the universe is reflected as in a mirror, in order that they might study its teaching. The sins of him who does this are quickly extinguished, and he comes to possess all the virtues. All opulence seeks him out, who is virtuous in disposition and exemplary in his conduct, who has a lively sense of gratitude and is devoted to the old in age and wisdom. May the Brahmanas, the cows, Janārdana and His devotees be gracious to me !' (41-44).

Maitreya said : When the King uttered these sentiments, the gods, the manes and the Brahmanas were delighted, and those good souls praised him, applauding what he said. 'The Veda spoke truly when it said that a man conquers the worlds of bliss through his son. For the wicked Vena, who was destroyed by the curse of the Brahmanas, has been rescued from hell. Hiraṇyakaśipu, who, too, might have been swallowed up by hell for traducing the Lord, escaped it because of his son Prahlāda's greatness. O foremost of warriors, father of the earth, may you, who have such devotion to Achyuta, the sole Lord of all the worlds, live for endless years. How fortunate we are in being your subjects, for it has made us look up to Mukunda for our protection and salvation, since you have been assiduous in spreading the glory of Vishnu, the most illustrious Lord, Who is devoted to the Brahmanas. There is nothing strange, O lord, in your laying such injunctions on your servants. Affection for their people is innate to the great, who are the soul of mercy. You have redeemed us from the night of *samsāra* in which we had been groping blindly by reason of our *karmas*, which are known as destiny.

We make our salutations to the Almighty Lord, in Whom Sattva reigns supreme, and Who, inspiring the Brahmana and the Kshatriya, sustains the universe by His power' (45-52).

CHAPTER XXII

SANATKUMĀRA'S TEACHING TO PRTHU

Maitreya said : As the people were thus extolling Prthu of the immense valour, there came there four sages who shone like the sun. The King and his followers saw the master-adepts as they descended from the sky and recognised them from their splendour, which dispelled the sins of the worlds. Along with the members of the assembly and his retainers, the son of Vena sprang up from his seat, as if under the urge to recover his life, which had soared upward at sight of them, even as the *jīva* does towards objects of enjoyment. With awed respect, he who knew how to conduct himself bowed to them in all humility, and when they had accepted *arghya* and taken their seats, worshipped them with all due ceremony. Sprinkling on his hair held in a knot the water that had washed their feet, thus showing how much he prized the custom and practice of virtuous men, he addressed with eager humility those elder brothers of Bhava, seated on their golden seats like the fires on the altar (1-6).

'Ah ! what meritorious thing did I do, that I have been favoured with the sight of you, who are the abode of all that is auspicious, and who do not show yourselves easily even to the yogis ! What is there that is beyond the reach of him in this or the next world, with whom the Brahmanas, and Śiva, and Vishnu, and their devotees are pleased ? Though you move through all the worlds, men do not perceive you any more than those who bring the world into existence do the Ātman that sees everything. Poor as they might be, those good men who lead the householder's life are blest indeed, if those who are worthy of the world's respect prefer by choice their houses, the water to be had there, the grass seats, the bare floor, and the company of the master of the house

and his servants ; while those houses, which may be filled with opulence but do not know the sanctifying water that has washed the feet of the Lord's devotees, are like the trees that are the haunts of poisonous vipers. Welcome to you, great Brahmanas, who from the desire for liberation have from childhood controlled the senses and observed the great vows with resolute faith. Shall we ever know blessedness, O lords, we who look upon the pleasures of the senses as the supreme end of life, and have fallen by reason of our own (past) *Karma* into the transmigratory life, the seed-bed of suffering ? It is improper to make enquiries about their health and welfare of those whose sole delight is in the Self, since they are strangers to those mental states which distinguish between weal and woe. Therefore, with full confidence I will proceed to ask you, who are the friends of all that are distraught by the ills of the flesh, how in this very life one may easily attain eternal welfare. It is clear that the Lord, Who knows no birth, Who shines as the soul of the enlightened, and reveals Himself in them as such, goes about the world in the guise of you, Lords of yoga, to bless His devotees' (7-16).

Maitreya said : Sanatkumāra smiled with pleasure, hearing those words of Pṛthu that so well became him ; they were eminently reasonable, and pregnant with meaning, though few in number, and they fell pleasantly on the ear. And he answered him thus. Sanatkumāra said : ' It is a pertinent question that you, great King, have asked, though you know the answer ; for you are anxious to promote the good of all creatures, as indeed are all good men. The coming together of good men to converse and hold worth-while discussions should be welcome to both those who ask and those who answer questions, since they are bound to promote the good of all. You, O King, do indeed possess that steadfast desire, which is so rare, to listen to the glories of the lotus feet of the Foe of Madhu, which is not easily won. When it is present, it purges the mind of the taint of desire, which colours it and which it is so hard to remove (17-20).

' This is the conclusion that emerges from a careful examination of the Sāstras, that the eternal welfare of

men can be secured only by their cultivating distaste for all that is other than the *Ātman*, and undeviating delight in the *Ātman*, which is none other than the unconditioned Brahma. Such love for the Brahma, and distaste for the world of cause and effect, which is other than the Brahma, come from implicit faith, the practice of their own *Dharma*, dedicating the fruits to the Lord, the desire to know all means of gaining the supreme good, steadiness in the practice of the Yoga of the Self, and humble service to the master-yogis, and constant listening to the holy tale of Him Whose fame purifies. They are furthered by distaste for the company of those who are absorbed in the pursuit of wealth or pleasure, and rejection of the objects of their pursuit, and by cultivation of love for solitude when the mind delights in the Self, but not when the ear drinks in the nectar of Hari's glories (21-23).

The practice of non-injury and adoption of the mode of life of the Paramahamsas; constant thought as to how best to promote one's own true interest; delightedly recalling the nectar-like tale of the doings of Mukunda; the practice of self-restraint, both internal and external, without any ulterior ends in view; avoidance of a censorious attitude towards others (who follow other paths); cessation of all pursuits dictated by self-interest; fortitude in putting up with the pairs of opposites (such as heat and cold); and the devotion that grows day by day by expatiating on the glorious qualities of Hari, which adorn the ears of His devotees—all these are means to the same end. When a man is rooted in the love of the Brahma, he, under the guidance of a Guru, burns up, by the power of enlightenment, the inner organ (subtle body) which veils the *jīva* and is made up predominantly of the five elements, and reduces it to a simulacrum; even as the fire, which has been kindled by the rubbing of the fire-stick, consumes it. When the subtle body has thus been drained of its vitality, and loses its power over the *jīva*, he no longer sees anything within or without him, any more than the dreamer does when the dream is ended, since what had caused the distinction of seer and seen has been eliminated. He is aware of the seer, and the seen, and the ego, which is the nexus between the two,

only when the internal organ is active in the state of waking and dreaming, but not in deep sleep. Only where there is a reflecting medium, such as water, does a man see himself and his reflection as two different things, and not in any other circumstances. Distracted by the senses, which are beguiled by the object on which they dwell with longing, the mind robs the intellect of its power of discrimination, as the clumps of grass (on the bank) suck up the water in the pool. With discrimination goes coherent thought, and thereupon follows loss of knowledge of the Self, which the wise speak of as destruction of the Self by the self. A man can suffer no greater loss than that brought about by his own fault, since it is for the sake of the Self that everything else is prized. Obsessive preoccupation with wealth and pleasure results in the destruction of all that men should cherish most. Deprived by such obsession of both knowledge and enlightenment, they are born again into the world of inanimate things (24-33).

'He who would rid himself of the nescience which is the cause of *samsāra* should avoid association with that which is detrimental to *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*. And, among these, it is *moksha* that is valued most, since the others lie under the constant menace of time. There can be no abiding felicity for any being, high or low, who comes into existence from the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas*, since their most ardent ambitions are doomed by all-powerful time. Therefore you must realize, O King, that you are one with the exalted Lord Who shines, self-luminous and all-pervading, in the innermost depths of the heart, Who is the Ruler and Controller of the *jīva* in all creatures, stationary and moving, who are limited by the body, the senses, the life-breath, the intellect, and the ego. I make my submission to Him, the Lord Who is eternally free, being pure Consciousness and Truth, and Who repels *Prakṛti*, which is tainted by *karma*; the unreality of the phenomenal world of cause and effect, projected on Him like the serpent on the wreath, becoming apparent with the exercise of discrimination. Seek refuge in Vāsudeva. Meditating on the splendour of the toes of His lotus feet, His devotees free themselves of the ego; cut the knot

fastened by *karma*, which the renouncers are unable to do, in spite of their stopping the outward streaming of the senses and emptying their minds of all content. Infinite are the travails of those who, having no protector to rescue them, like a boat, from the ocean of the transmigratory existence, infested by those crocodiles, the sixfold enemies, desperately resort to difficult means. Therefore make a boat for yourself of the feet of the Lord Hari, which are supremely worthy of worship, and cross that formidable sea of suffering' (34-40).

Maitreya said : Thus clearly shown the truth of the Self by Brahmā's son, Sanatkumāra, who had realized the Brahma, the King extolled him. He said, 'Hari, Who has compassion for the distressed, granted me a boon, and all of you came here, O Brahman, to fulfil it. And you have done so in the amplest measure out of your abounding kindness. All that I have, including this body of mine, is but the gift of the good, which I hold by their grace. So what can I give you ? But let me tender to you whatever I have (all of which are your own)—my life, my spouse, my sovereignty, army, kingdom, and treasury, (as one offers to God what is His gift), O Brahman. The man who is well versed in the Veda and the Sāstra is fit to hold the command of the army, rule the kingdom, administer justice, nay, be the overlord of all men. What the Brahmana eats, what he wears, what he gives away, is his own; it is by his leave that the Kshattriya and others have something to eat. May those who in their boundless kindness have, from their knowledge of the Veda, thus expounded to us with absolute certainty the real nature of the Lord, in discoursing on the Self, find their reward in the satisfaction of having done what they have done. Who could possibly requite them, except by joining their palms in salutation ?' (41-47).

Maitreya went on : Duly honoured by the first King, those masters of the lore of the Self praised his virtues and rose into the sky before the eyes of all present. As for the son of Vena, foremost among those who were truly great, he was securely established in contemplation of his essential Self by the power of concentration that he had derived from the instruction in the nature of the Self, and he looked upon himself as one who had found

fulfilment. He performed *karmas* at the appointed time, in the prescribed place and in a fitting manner, with due regard to his physical strength and resources, and dedicated them to the Brahma. Performing *karmas* with a collected mind, without attachment to them, resigning the fruits to the Brahma, and looking upon the Ātman as the disinterested Witness in the body and as totally distinct from it, he lived like the sun, without egotism or attachment to the pleasures of life, while remaining a householder surrounded by imperial opulence (48-52).

Thus fulfilling his duties in a spirit of enlightenment, he had, by Archis, five sons who were in every way worthy of him, Vijitāśva, Dhūmrakeśa, Haryaksha, Draviṇa and Vṛka. Prthu, with his mind anchored in Achyuta, displayed as occasion required, the distinctive qualities of all the Guardians of the worlds for the protection of the world order. He established his right to the title of 'King' by bringing delight to the hearts of his subjects with every thought, word and deed of his, and by his endearing virtues, like a second King Soma (the moon-god). He was like the sun both in giving and taking from his subjects, and in exacting obedience. In his splendour he was as formidable as fire. He had the invincibility of Indra and the patience of the earth. He was like heaven in fulfilling the wishes of his people. He resembled Parjanya in showering all blessings on them, bringing them supreme contentment. He was unfathomable as the ocean and firm as the king of the mountains (Meru). He was like Dharmarāja (Yama) in chastising the wicked, and like Himavān in the ever new marvels that he exhibited. He had the opulence of Kubera, while his resources were a secret, like Varuṇa's. Like the air he moved about his kingdom constantly, and controlled his subjects by his physical strength, the robustness of his faculties and his mental vigour. In war he was irresistible, like the Great God (Śiva) Who rules the spirits. In beauty he resembled the god of love, and he was brave as a lion. He recalled Manu by his love of his subjects, and the exalted Lord, the Unborn (Brahmā), by his might and majesty. He was the equal of Bṛhaspati in his exposition of the Veda,

while in his self-conquest he was like Hari Himself. But in devotion to the cow, the Guru, the Brahmana and the devotees of Vishvaksena, as in modesty, humility, goodness and unwearied zeal in the cause of others, he was without a peer. His praises were sung by worthy men so loudly that everywhere in the three worlds they reached the ears of even women, as Rama's glory had entered the ears of all good men (53-63).

CHAPTER XXIII

PRTHU'S DEATH

Maitreya said: The realization that he was old dawned one day on the son of Vena, the self-controlled ruler of his people, who provided all creatures, stationary and moving, with their means of living and fostered the Dharma to which good men were faithful. All that he had created had prospered under his hands, and he had executed the will of the Lord for which he was born into this world. Entrusting his daughter (the earth)—who seemed to weep at the prospect of separation—to the care of his sons, he departed to the penitential woods, followed by his wife alone, leaving his subjects disconsolate. And there he subjected himself to a cast-iron discipline, and began the severe austerities prescribed for the anchorite with the same zeal as in the old days he had embarked upon his career of world conquest. He lived for some time on roots, fruits and tubers, then on dry leaves. He later subsisted on water alone for a few fortnights, and then sustained himself on air. Submitting to the discipline of the five fires in summer, exposing himself to torrential downpours during the rains, remaining plunged to the neck in water in the winter months, and lying down on the bare ground (in all seasons), the resolute man lived the life of a contemplative. Patiently submitting to all ills, putting the curb on the tongue and the senses, and maintaining strict celibacy, he established control over the breath and practised the highest austerities from the desire to propitiate Krishna. By steady progress in them the effects of past *karma* were annulled, and the heart was

purified ; the senses and the mind were stilled by the control of the breath, and the bonds of subliminal instincts were snapped. With a heart thus purified of all taint, that prince of men devoted himself to the worship of the Supreme Lord, following what the blessed Sanat-kumāra had taught as the highest means to Self-realization. As the good man persevered thus earnestly, and incessantly practised the Dharma that is pleasing to the Lord, his heart was imbued with exclusive devotion to the exalted Lord, Who is none other than the Brahma. When his mind was transformed into pure *sattva* by devoted service to the Lord, knowledge came to him, along with non-attachment. And with that knowledge, sharpened by the love of the Lord, which attains fullness from constant meditation, he destroyed the ego, which veils the *jīva* and is the breeding ground of doubts. Having realized the nature of the Self and thus freed himself from the error of confounding it with the body, he was not attracted to *yogic* powers, and he renounced, too, that knowledge which had enabled him to get rid of the ego. The ascetic who renounces the world is not proof against the temptations held out by *yogic* powers so long as he does not fall in love with the tales of the Elder Brother of Gada (I-12).

In this manner that most valiant of men, firmly established in the realization of the identity of his own soul with the Brahma, discarded his body at the appointed time, merging the mind in the Ātman. Blocking the anus with the heels, he raised the life-breath in stages to the various psychic centres, the navel, the heart, the chest, the throat and the junction of the eyebrows ; and then, taking it to the crown of the head, he, who had shed all desire, merged it in the cosmic air, and likewise he merged the solid parts of the body in the earth, its energy in fire, the spaces enclosed by the organs in outer space, and the watery parts in water, each being merged in its origin and without being mixed up with the others. Then he merged the earth with water, water with fire, fire with air and air with space. Merging the mind in the senses, the senses in the subtle elements and the subtle elements in the ego, he merged the ego in the Mahat. Then he merged the Mahat, in

which is contained the seed of all existents, in the *jīva*, who is largely conditioned by *Māyā*. And he, the *jīva*, who had been so conditioned, now discarded that limiting adjunct (the subtle body), being established in his essential Self by virtue of his all-powerful knowledge and non-attachment (13-18).

The empress Archis, his spouse and queen, had followed him to the penitential woods—she who was so delicately formed that her feet could hardly bear the touch of earth. Though she became exceedingly thin by her steadiness in the observance of the vows her husband had taken and the Dharma he followed, by her service to him, and her adherence to the austere mode of living proper to the sages, she did not feel them as hardships at all, in her joy at the touch of her beloved's hand and his loving regard. When she saw that life had departed from the body of the ruler of the earth and her beloved husband, the virtuous woman wept for a while, and then placed it on a pyre made on the mountain side. Having done the appropriate rites, she bathed in the river and offered water libations to that husband who had done such magnificent deeds; then making her prostrations to the gods, who had assembled in the sky, and meditating on her lord's feet, she walked round the burning fire thrice and threw herself into it (19-22).

Seeing the good woman follow in death her husband *Prthu*, foremost among heroes, the goddesses, granters of boons, who had gathered in their thousands, praised her, along with the gods. Showering flowers there on the peak of the Mandara mountain, as the celestial *tūryas* sounded, they thus spoke of her to each other. The goddesses said: 'How fortunate this woman was, thus to devote herself heart and soul to her lord, the emperor, even as the goddess *Srī*, the spouse of the Lord of the sacrifice, devotes herself to Him! See, there goes Archis, the faithful wife, with her husband, the son of Vena, to the worlds above, surpassing us by her achievements, which others cannot even dream of! What else, indeed, can they not achieve, who, though they are mortals, whose days are short and uncertain, have gained that knowledge which is the sure pathway to God! Alas for him who, having obtained with infinite

difficulty birth as a human being, which might be the gateway to liberation, wallows in pleasure, taken in by fate, and thus proves his own worst enemy!' (23-28).

Maitreya said : As the goddesses were thus praising her, the wife of Vena's son went to that world which her husband had gained, he who was foremost among the Self-realized, and who had resigned his heart to Achyuta. Such was the greatness of Pṛthu, first among the Lord's devotees. The life of that man of exalted achievement you have now heard. He who reads or hears attentively and with faith this tale that confers extraordinary merit, or gets others to hear it, will attain the world to which Pṛthu had gone. The Brahmana who reads this will grow in Brāhmic lustre, the Kshatriya will win a kingdom, the Vaiśya will become the head of his clan, the Sūdra will gain the esteem of the world. Any man (or woman) who hears this tale thrice with ardent faith will, if childless, have a large and splendid progeny ; if poor, he will become one of the wealthiest of men ; if unknown to fame, he will win great and worthy renown ; if ignorant, he will become learned. This tale will confer all blessings on the hearer and cancel all causes of unhappiness ; it will bring him fame and fortune, prolong his life on earth, and help him to gain heaven as well as to rid himself of the sins of Kali. Being a prime means to the attainment of the four ends of life, it should be repeatedly heard by those who are keen on them. If a king, intent on conquest, starts on an expedition after hearing this, those kings against whom he marches will bring him tribute, as the kings had brought tribute to Pṛthu. The most meritorious thing that a man can do is to hear or read this holy tale of the son of Vena, and make others hear it, without a thought of reward and with the purest devotion to the Lord. I have told this tale, O son of Vichitravīrya, because it brings out the supreme greatness of the Almighty Lord. The man who lets his mind dwell on it will attain the goal that Pṛthu reached. The man who hears and propagates this tale of Pṛthu regularly and with disinterested zeal will come to have a love that is capable of all things, for the feet of the exalted Lord, with which one may ferry over the sea of *samsāra* (29-39).

CHAPTER XXIV

SIVA INSTRUCTS THE PRACHETASES

Maitreya said : Prthu's son Vijitāśva, of the immense renown, then became emperor. As he loved his brothers, he gave them rule over the kingdoms in the different quarters ; the East going to Haryaksha, the South to Dhūmrakeśa, the West to Vṛka, and the fourth (North) to Draviṇa. He (Vijitāśva) who was known as Antardhāna, because Indra had bestowed upon him as a gift the power to make himself invisible, had three sons by Sikhandinī, who enjoyed the esteem of all. They were Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Suchi. These were the three fires who were born as men as the result of a curse by Vasishṭa ; later they regained their former state as gods. Antardhāna, who did not slay Indra, though he knew that he was the purloiner of the horse, had a son, Havirdhāna, by his wife Nabhaswati. Regarding as cruel the exercise of kingly power, which involved the levying of tribute and taxes, and the infliction of punishment, he tacitly relinquished it, the holding of a long Sattrā sacrifice providing the excuse. Even while engaged in the sacrifice, he who saw the Paramātmā in everything, offered the sacrifice as worship of the immaculate Lord, Who is perfect, and he attained His world by the intense concentration he achieved (1-7).

Havirdhānī bore Havirdhāna six sons, known as Barhishat, Gaya, Śukla, Krishna, Satya and Jitavrata, O Vidura. The supremely fortunate Barhishat, the son of Havirdhāna, and ruler of his people, was a master of Vedic ritual and of *yogic* techniques, O first of the Kurus. As he offered sacrifice after sacrifice without interruption, the earth, covered with the *kūśa* grass laid endwise by him, became one vast sacrificial ground. Following the advice of the great God (Brahmā), he married Satadruti, a daughter of the god of ocean. Looking at her, who was very young, lovely in every limb and splendidly adorned, as she walked round the sacred fire during the marriage rite, the god of fire fell in love with her, as he had done with Suki. By the mere tinkling of her anklets the young bride ravished

the minds of the gods and the Asuras, the Gandharvas and the sages, the Siddhas, men and Nāgas, in every quarter of the globe (8-12).

Prāchinabarhis had ten sons by Satadruti, who all bore the identical name of Prachetas and were equally keen on the observance of vows, and past masters of Dharma. Told by their father to beget children, they entered the ocean to practise austerities. And they propitiated the Lord, Who dispenses the fruits of austerities, by practising *tapas* for ten thousand years, meditating on the hymn which Girīśa, who had met them on the way, had taught them from His desire to bless them, reciting it and offering worship (13-15).

Here Vidura put a question : ' How did the Prachetas come to meet Girīśa on their way to the ocean, and what did Hara tell them, being pleased with them ? Tell us all about it, please, for it is bound to be of great benefit to us, O Brahman. How difficult it must be for mortals to come face to face with Śiva in this life, O sage, since even contemplatives who had abjured all ties could not see the Lord, Whom they longed to see, but only contemplate Him in their minds. Though His delight is all in the Self, the exalted Lord Bhava is active using His dread power in the interest of maintaining the world order' (16-18).

Maitreya answered : Receiving with all humility their father's commands, the pious Prachetas proceeded west, their minds bent on the practice of austerities. They came to a huge lake, only slightly smaller than the sea, with water pellucid as good men's minds and filled with placid amphibian life. The water-lily, blue, red and white, and the lotus grew in abundance there, and the place resounded with the notes of swan and *sāras*-crane, *chakravāka* and *kārandava*. The trees and vines seemed to thrill to the melodious hum of drunken bees ; the wind held high festival there, scattering the pollen of the lotus in all directions. The princes were astonished to hear the music of *mṛdanga*, *paṇava* and other instruments proceeding from it, followed by the delightful singing of divine melodies. Just then they saw the Lord Śiva, Him of the black throat and three eyes, foremost of the immortals, emerging from the

lake with His followers, His body glowing like molten gold, the demigods singing His praises. Seeing His eyes graciously bent upon them, they prostrated themselves before Him in all eagerness. The exalted Lord Who dispels the sufferings of those who seek refuge in Him, and Who is in love with Dharma, was pleased with them, who were well versed in Dharma and virtuous in disposition and were happy to see Him. And He spoke to them. Śrī Rudra said, 'You are the sons of Bārṇhishat, my children, I know what you wish to do. May all be well with you. It was to do you a favour that I showed Myself to you. He who seeks refuge in the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, Who is transcendent over the subtle Pradhāna with its three *guṇas*, and the *puruṣa* (spirit) known as *jīva*, is dear to me. The man who is faithful to his own *dharma* during a hundred lives attains the world of Brahmā—and after a much longer period—Me. But the devotee of the exalted Lord Hari attains forthwith (Vaikuntha) the supersensible Abode of Vishnu, even as I and the gods do when we remit our offices. Because you are devotees of the Lord, you are dear to Me as the Lord Himself ; and there is no one dearer to the Lord's devotees than Myself. I shall teach you a hymn of praise, which you should recite clearly and distinctly. It purifies and elevates the mind, fills the heart with joy and brings one liberation. Now listen with all attention' (19-31).

Maitreya said : And with loving kindness, the Lord Śīva, Who is ever devoted to Narayana, taught the following hymn to them who stood before Him with folded hands. Śrī Rudra said : 'Thou hast made manifest Thy supreme eminence, O Lord, in order that the foremost among those who have achieved enlightenment may revel in the bliss of the Self. May that bliss be mine. Thou Thyself art eternally established in the experience of that bliss. Salutations to Thee That art the Ātman, ever-blissful, and that standest forth, too, as all that is. Salutations to the Lord of the lotus navel, the Controller of the gross and subtle elements, and of the senses, to Vāsudeva, serene, immutable and self-luminous. Salutations to Sankarṣaṇa, unmanifest and infinite, the Destroyer of the worlds,

and to Pradyumna, the Ruler of the intellect, who brings enlightenment to all creatures. Salutations again and again to Aniruddha, the Ruler of the mind, which controls the senses. Salutations to Thee, the supremely pure Ruler of the sun, Whose effulgence fills the universe, Who knows no waxing or waning, Who is the pathway to heaven and liberation alike and is seated in the pure heart. Salutations to Thee That art the Lord of fire and makest possible the performance of the sacrificial rite and the continuance of the institution of sacrifice. Salutations to Thee, the Lord of the moon, the food of the manes and the gods, and the support of the Vedic sacrifice. Salutations to Thee That art manifest as water, which is the base of all tastes and flavours, and delights the hearts of all creatures. Salutations to Thee That standest forth as the earth, as the bodies of all creatures, and as the cosmic body. Salutations to Thee That (as air) controlllest the three worlds and endowest them with strength, mental vigour and the perfection of the senses. Salutations to Thee That as space (with its subtle element, sound) bringest one the knowledge of all existents and givest content to the words 'inner' and 'outer'. Salutations to Thee That art heaven and Vaikuntha and all other worlds of light, which may be gained only by holiness. Salutations to Thee That art the *karma* that causes involvement in the world as well as that which promotes renunciation, and That leadest one to the world of the manes and the gods. Salutations to Him Who is Death too, the dispenser of the fruits of unrighteousness, of sorrow and suffering. Salutations to Thee, O Omniscient Lord That art the source of all blessings. Salutations to Thee That art the Supreme Dharma, and Krishna of the limitless intelligence. Salutations to Thee, the Primordial Lord, the divine propagator of the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga; Salutations to Thee, the bountiful Lord Rudra, Controller of the ego, armed with the three powers. Salutations to Thee That standest forth as (the organs of) knowledge and action, and as the Lord of speech in its infinite variety (32-43).

'Grant us, who yearn for it, O Lord, a glimpse of that form of Thine which Thy devotees worship, that form

which is exceedingly dear to Thy lovers, and which displays all the qualities that are most pleasing to the senses ; that form, dark and with the sheen of the rain-cloud on it, the summation of all beauty ; with its four long and comely arms and the face that pleases by the perfection of every feature—eyes like the inside petals of the lotus, with the smiling sidelong glance full of love, perfect eyebrows, lofty nose, beautiful teeth, lovely cheeks and mouth, and the even ears and curly locks that enhance its charm. Show us that form clad in fine linen, bright as the filaments of the lotus, adorned with shining ear-pendants and sparkling crown, bracelets, pearl necklace, anklets and girdle, and rich with the splendour of conch-shell and discus, mace and lotus, the garland of wild flowers and the profusion of gems ; with the halo, on the lion-shoulders, of the Kausthubha jewel that lies on the lovely neck ; with the dazzling chest which puts in the shade the touchstone streaked with gold, since the Goddess Sṛī, who is inseparable from Thee, makes her abode on it ; with the belly like the leaf of the peepul, charming with its folds, which rise and fall with the inhaling and the exhaling breath ; with the deep, right-whorled navel that looks as though it would draw in the universe that had emerged from it ; with the golden girdle lying on the fine cloth whose splendour is set off by the dark waist it covers ; with the lovely, symmetrical feet, shanks and thighs, the unprominent knees and the gracious presence. Reveal to us, O Master and Mentor of the worlds, Who alone can teach us, ignorant folk, the way to release, reveal to us that form of Thine wherein we may take refuge and be free from all travails, by the light of Thy feet that glow like the petals of the autumn lotus and dispel by the radiance of their toe-nails the darkness in our hearts. That form of Thine may be only contemplated in the heart by those that are eager for self-purification. But such contemplation will enable those who are faithful to their own Dharma to persevere in the practice of devotion, which assures freedom from fear. For though Thou art beyond the reach of worldlings, the man who has won the kingdom of heaven ardently yearns for Thee, and the man who has achieved enlightenment,

rejecting all else, has Thee for his cherished goal, while Thou art easily won by Thy devotees. Having propitiated Thee That art so hard to please by that exclusive devotion which even the good find it difficult to achieve, who would want anything else but the shade of Thy feet, since Death, who destroys the universe by the mere wrinkling of his eyebrow in potent resolve, knows that he has no power over those who have sought the shelter of those feet ? (44-56).

‘ I regard neither heaven nor liberation as a gain comparable to association, be it even for a fraction of a second, with those who love Thee ; how much less should I value what men count as blessings ! Grant us this boon, O Lord, that we may be favoured with the company of those whose hearts have been cleansed by Thy streaming glory and whose persons have been purified by the sacred waters that flow from Thy foot and dispel sins, and who have, consequently, compassion for all creatures, minds unclouded by loves and hates, and exemplary virtues. When a man’s mind is not distracted by the objects of the senses, nor sunk in the dark cave of blind torpor, but has become pure as the result of sustained devotion inspired by association with Thy devotees, that very moment he becomes capable of reflection and perceives the truth about Thee—That Thou art the Brahma, the Supernal Light, infinite as the sky, on which the phenomenal world is projected, and Thou manifestest Thyself in that world. We know Thee, O Lord, as the One Who created the universe with its seeming reality, by His Māyā, which takes myriad forms, Who keeps it going, and then destroys it, Himself remaining unchanged ; that Māyā, which induces in all others the sense of difference, being powerless against Him, Who is ever free. But only those know the true import of the Veda and the Tantra who, remaining faithful to the way of works, utilize the various modes of worship, and from the desire for liberation, worship Thee with faith and zeal in this form of Thine to which the elements, the organs and the mind alike point (57-62).

‘ Thou alone wert in the beginning, O Primordial Lord, with Thy power of Māyā quiescent. Then she

caused the differentiation of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which brought about the existence of the world, by creating Mahat, the ego, space, air, fire, water and earth, as well as the gods, the sages and the hosts of living creatures. Thou enterest, with a fraction of Thyself, the bodies of four kinds that Thou hast created. Therefore he who is within these bodies is known as the *purusha* ; he is the *jīva*, who feeds his senses on pleasures as trivial as the honey collected by the honey-fly. And Thou Thyself, never to be known but by inference, effectest the destruction of all creatures at each other's hands, buffeting them with irresistible force, as the wind does, dispersing the bank of clouds. As the hungry serpent, licking its chops, pounces upon the rat, Thou, ever-vigilant Death, pouncest upon him who, being crazy in the pursuit of enjoyment and pleasure, is so busy thinking and planning that he is wholly oblivious of the danger. What wise man, who feels any disrespect shown to Thee as a mortal blow aimed at himself, will give up Thy lotus feet, which the teacher and mentor of us all (Brahmā) worshipped to save himself from destruction, while the fourteen Manus did the same thing without arguing about it and about ? All the universe lies under the shadow of death, dreading the wrath of Rudra. Therefore we take refuge in Thee, knowing that no fear can assail us in that sanctuary' (63-68).

Srī Rudra went on : 'Recite this regularly, O Princes, with pure hearts, while scrupulously practising your own Dharma, and giving your minds wholly to the Lord Hari, the Inner Ruler in all beings, singing His praises and thinking on Him constantly. Worship Him, the Lord Hari, the Ātman in you and in all creatures, extolling and meditating on Him continually. Desiring to forward the work of creation, the exalted Lord (Brahmā), the Chief of the creators, taught this hymn in the far past to us, his sons, Bhṛgu and the rest, when we were about to start on our work of creation. We, the patriarchs, urged to beget progeny, cleansed ourselves of all impurities by means of this hymn and brought into existence a multifarious creation. The man who puts his trust wholly in Vāsudeva and constantly recites this *japa* with a steady

mind and one-pointed attention, will before long achieve that goal which he has in view. The highest of all the ends of life which may be won in this world is *Jnāna*. He who has *Jnāna* for a boat easily crosses over the shoreless sea of sorrows. He who recites with faith this song of Mine in praise of the Lord, propitiates Hari, Who is not easy to please. He who recites this with a tranquil and steady mind will get all that he wants from Him, the Abode of all blessings, Who will be supremely pleased to hear this hymn of Mine in His praise. He who hears attentively, with folded hands and with all faith, this hymn as soon as he gets up of a morning, will be freed from the bondage of *karma*. Recite this hymn of Mine in praise of the supreme Lord, the Paramātman, with single-mindedness, O Princes, and practise severe austerities, and you will gain all that you desire.' (69-79).

CHAPTER XXV

PURANJANA : AN ALLEGORY OF THE SOUL

Maitreya said : Having thus instructed the sons of Prāchīnabarhis and received their worship, the Lord Hara vanished from view even as the princess were looking. Incessantly reciting that song of Rudra in praise of the Lord, the Prachetases practised austerities in the water for ten thousand years. Nārada, who knew the truth of the Self, took pity on Prāchīnabarhis, who was addicted to the practice of *karma*, and brought him enlightenment, O Kshattā. 'What good do you hope to win, O King, by the practice of rites? Men of wisdom do not look to rites for that good which consists in the cessation of sorrow and the attainment of happiness' (1-4).

The King told him, 'I know nothing of the supreme good, O blessed one, my mind being unsettled by perpetual preoccupation with *karma*. Impart to me that knowledge which brings enlightenment and by which I may release myself from bondage to *karma*. The ignorant man, looking upon son and spouse and wealth

as the supreme good, is caught up in the domestic life with its counterfeit *dharma*s; it leads to his wandering endlessly in the maze of *samsāra*, and he knows nothing of *moksha*, the highest of all blessings (5-6).'

Nārada told him, 'Look there, O Patriarch and King, those are the numberless sacrificial victims which you pitilessly slaughtered. Enraged at the recollection of your cruelty, they are looking forward to the day of your death, when they will tear and mangle you with their horns sharp as iron spikes. In this connection, I shall tell you an old story, the legend of Puranjana. Listen attentively. There lived long ago a king of great renown, who was known as Puranjana, O King. He had a companion whose name and doings were unknown to the world. He wandered over the whole earth looking for a worthy habitation. But, exceedingly able as he was, he could not find one that was worthy of him, and he felt dejected. Being desirous of enjoying every pleasure, he found that none of the cities on earth would answer all his purposes. Once he saw on the southern slope of the Himālaya a city with nine gates, which had all the features that he looked for. It was surrounded by high walls and a moat, with woods on the outskirts. It had watch-towers, sky-lights and arched gateways. And it was crowded thick with houses that had crests of gold, silver and iron. The upper rooms of its mansions were studded with sapphire and crystal, cat's-eye, pearl, emerald and ruby, and it dazzled the eye, like Bhogavati, with its opulence. It had assembly halls, cross-ways, thoroughfares, gambling-halls, streets of shops, rest-houses and terraces built of coral. Banners were hung out from flag-staffs. In the woods on the outskirts there were large numbers of celestial trees and vines, and sheets of water which resounded with the notes of birds and the hum of bees. The banks of the lotus pools there presented a sumptuous appearance, with the tender foliage and boughs of their trees, shaken by the light breeze that came laden with the fragrance of flowers and drops of water from the snowy cascades. To the peaceful woods that teemed with harmless wild animals the wayfarer seemed to be invited by the warbling of the koel (7-19).

In that wood he beheld a lovely woman who had come there by chance and was attended by ten servants, each of whom commanded a hundred. She had for chamberlain a five-headed serpent. She, who was on the threshold of womanhood, and had adorned herself with many ornaments, sought a spouse. The young woman had a shapely nose, beautiful teeth and lovely cheeks, and a strikingly handsome countenance. On the symmetrical ears shone ear-pendants. She wore a tawny skirt and a gold zone over her well-shaped hip. Her complexion was dark. Goddess-like, she moved to the music of anklets and toe-rings. As she walked with the stately gait of the elephant, she modestly covered with the corner of her upper garment her breasts, which were rounded, symmetrical and placed close together and indicated the onset of puberty (20-24).

The valiant man (Puranjana), his heart pierced by the sidelong glances from under the dancing eye-brows that spoke her love, addressed her, whose face was lit up by a bashful smile, using words that could charm the heart. "Who may you be, O you with eyes like lotus petals? Whose daughter are you, chaste one? And where do you come from? What do you do here in the city outskirts? Tell me, gentle lady. Who are these followers of yours, the eleventh of whom seems to be their chief, and immensely strong? And who are these beautiful women, O lovely one? And this serpent that goes before you—who is he? Are you the Goddess of Modesty, by any chance, or Bhavāni, or Vāk, or Ramā, searching in secret, like the sages in the forest, for your Lord, Who has attained all His wishes solely by His devotion to your feet? And (if you are Ramā), where did you let fall the lotus that you sport? But, no, you cannot be one of these, for your feet touch the earth, you lovely woman. You should adorn this city, living with me, the greatest of heroes, who shall do mighty deeds, just as the Goddess Śrī adorns the highest world (Vaikuntha), along with the Lord of the Sacrifice. Deign to shed your grace on me, O auspicious one, since the God of Love, instigated by you, with those eyebrows that are never still and that coy and loving smile, harrows my heart, distracted by your sidelong glances. Lift up,

your head, which is bent modestly, O you of the ravishing smile, and let me look at your face, with its lovely eyebrows and eyes with brilliant pupils and a tongue that could charm, and framed in its long and abundant tresses of black hair''' (25-31).

When Puranjana thus weakly implored her, heroic soul though he was, the woman laughingly accepted him, having fallen in love with him, O valiant one. 'We have no clear knowledge of who was the author of our being, or, for that matter, of others, O best of men. Neither do we know to whose family we belong or who gave us names. All that we know for certain is that we are now here in this city. We do not know who fashioned this city for our residence, O doughty warrior. These men and women are my companions, O courteous one. While I sleep, this serpent keeps vigil, guarding the city. It is well that you have come here. Since you long for the pleasures of the senses, I shall procure them for you through my friends, O subduer of the foe. Taking up your residence, my lord, in this city with the nine gates, you may enjoy for a hundred years the delights that I shall provide. How could I bring myself to administer to the pleasure of any one but you, of one who is a stranger to the delights of sex, who does not devote a thought to the after-life, or take care of the morrow, but lives much as animals do? Living the life of the householder, one may win Dharma, Artha and Kāma and the joy that comes from having children, and liberation too, as well as fame and those worlds of bliss which know neither sorrow nor sin and to which ascetics are strangers. It is the householder's life that is regarded as the sanctuary that shelters the manes, the gods, the *rishis*, men and all other creatures, as well as the householder himself. How could any woman like me refuse to accept as spouse one who is so renowned as yourself, so generous, charming and lovable, and who has sought me out, O valiant one? Where is the woman on earth whose heart will not be drawn to those arms of yours that resemble the serpent's body, O mighty one, seeing that you are constantly on the move to dispel the sorrows of all helpless and hopeless creatures by the smiling look that you in your compassion cast on them?' (32-42).

Nārada went on : The pair, having thus bound themselves by a compact, entered the city and lived there happily for a hundred years, O King. Greeted everywhere with sweet songs of praise by minstrels, he diverted himself in the company of women ; and in summer he bathed in the river. That city had seven gates above and two below, through which he who ruled there could go to his different realms. Of the seven above, five opened to the east, one to the south and one to the north ; the two below opened to the west. I shall tell you their names, O King, Two of those facing east, which are placed together, are called Khadyotā and Āvirmukhī. Through them the ruler of the city enters the realm known as Vibhīājitam, accompanied by Dyumān. Two other gates, opening to the east, called Nālinī and Nālinī, are also placed together. He goes through them to the realm of Sourabha with his companion Avadhūta. The fifth gate opening to the east is called Mukhyā ; through that the ruler of the city enters the realm called Āpaṇa with his companion Vipāṇa, and the realm Bahūdāna with his companion Rasajña. By the city gate on the south known as Pitṛhū, Puranjana enters the realm known as Dakshina Pāṇchāla along with Śrutadhara. By the city gate on the north known as Devahū he enters the realm of Uttara-Pāṇchāla with the same Śrutadhara. By the western gate, called Āsurī, Puranjana enters the realm known as Grāmaka in the company of Durmada. By the other western gate, called Nirrti, he goes to the realm known as Vaiśasa, accompanied by Lubdhaka. Among the citizens of the city there are two who are blind and who are known as Nirvāk and Peśaskṛt. The ruler of those who have the use of their senses goes out with the aid of one and works with the aid of the other (43-54).

Entering the private apartments with Vishūchīna, he alternately falls into a state of dull apathy, or finds calm happiness, or rejoices deliriously, in the company of his wife and children. The ignorant man, the deluded victim of desires, is engrossed in action, obediently following the lead of his wife. When she swills liquor, he also fuddles himself with drink, when she eats, he eats, when she munches tidbits, he too does the same.

When she sings he sings, when she weeps he weeps, when she laughs he laughs, when she talks nonsense he must follow suit. When she runs he runs, when she stands still he follows her example. He lies down with her, and he sits up when she does. He hears when she hears, sees when she sees, smells when she smells, touches when she does. When she grieves, he grieves with her, like one miserable. When she is glad, he too is in high spirits; when she rejoices, he does too. The ignorant man, thus dancing to the tune of his queen, like a pet monkey, became a stranger to his old self and servilely obeyed her in everything, however unwillingly (55-62).

CHAPTER XXVI

PURANJANA GOES OUT HUNTING

Nārada said : Once he, armed with his mighty bow and exhaustless quiver, and clad in golden armour, got into his swift chariot drawn by five horses, fitted with two shafts, two wheels, and an axle, and three flag-staffs. That chariot had five knots, one rein, a driver, a seat for the charioteer, two axle-poles and five receptacles (for weapons). It had seven fenders, and was fitted with gold appurtenances; and it could move in five directions. And he went to the forest, Pancha-prastha, accompanied by the Eleventh, his Commander-in-Chief. With bow and arrow the proud man hunted there, having left behind his wife, who did not deserve thus to be deserted, in his inordinate passion for killing beasts. Intent on this demoniac pursuit, he, cruel and merciless, killed with his sharp arrows a large number of wild animals in the forest. To him who is inordinately fond of the chase, the scriptures allow the killing of forest animals only; but only if he is a king; and they should be such animals as may be offered in the sacrifice or in such rites as those for the propitiation of the manes. It must be an important rite that would warrant such killing, and no more should be killed than would suffice for the rite. The man who understands the Śāstra

and does his ordained duties in the true spirit, is freed from the taint of *karma*, great King, by the knowledge that is the fruit of doing his duty. The man who performs rites, not in this spirit but with an egoistic attitude towards them, becomes addicted to them; he is drawn into the vortex of the transmigratory life and sinks to the bottom (1-8).

Many creatures were thus slain, put to cruel pain, their limbs mangled by sharp arrows winged with a variety of feathers—a sight that no compassionate man could bear. Slaughtering rabbits, hogs, buffalo, *gavaya*, *ruru*, porcupine and other animals—both those that were fit for offering in a rite, and those that were not—he was tired. Exhausted by hunger and thirst, he stopped the hunt and went home. Having bathed and eaten suitable food, he rested on his bed and threw off his fatigue. He then adorned himself with scents, sandal paste, wreaths, and so on, and putting on his jewels longed for the company of his queen. He was filled with a pleasant sense of well-being, and was feeling happy and proud; and thoughts of love occupied his heart. But his lovely and dutiful helpmate was nowhere to be seen. Feeling unhappy, he questioned the women attendants, O Prāchinabarhis: 'Is all well with you and your mistress, my good women? The opulent comforts of home do not seem as splendid as they used to be. When there is no mother in the house, nor spouse who looks on her husband as her god, what sensible man will go on sitting there and moping as in a chariot without essential parts? Where is that lovely woman who sustains me with her illuminating counsel whenever I feel as if I were sinking in a sea of misery?' The women answered, 'We do not know, O lord of men, what your beloved has in mind. But you can see that she has cast herself down on the bare ground, O slayer of the foe' (9-17).

Nārada went on, 'Puranjana, seeing his queen lying on the ground, careless of her body, was grief-stricken, his intelligence confounded by his attachment to her. Trying to appease her with soft words, while his heart was anguished, he could not see any indication that it was her love for him that made her angry. The

gallant man, who knew the arts of conciliation, slowly pacified her. He touched her feet, and placing her on his lap and fondling her, spoke to her thus (18-20).

Puranjana said, 'Those servants are indeed unfortunate, O lovely one, whose masters do not exercise their lawful authority and punish them for their offences. For the master who punishes his man confers on him the supreme blessing ; he is foolish who, in his resentment, does not see that this is the act of a friend, O lovely one. Show us, your servants, O spirited lady with the splendid eyebrows and the beautiful teeth, that face with the lofty nose and the tongue that charms, and adorned with the black, bee-like curls, into which slowly steals the laughing look impeded by the burden of love and bashfulness. I shall, O warrior's bride, visit with punishment the man who has offended against you, whoever he might be, unless he is a Brahmana or a devotee of the Foe of Madhu. But I cannot imagine anyone in the three worlds or even beyond, who fears me so little that he can (provoke me and yet) be happy and carefree. I have never before seen your face without the *tilak* mark on it, unwashed, joyless, forbidding in its frown, lacklustre and without love ; nor have I seen your rounded breasts soiled by tears of grief, or your lips, which resemble the *bimba* fruit, without their saffron-coloured stain. Be gracious to me, your doting lover, and pardon my fault in going out hunting without your leave, succumbing to my addiction to this weakness. When he who can give her the joys of love is in her power, robbed of his courage by the impetuous onset of passion, what woman who entertains desire will not take him to herself for her own satisfaction ? ' (21-26).

CHAPTER XXVII

GANDHARVAS SACK PURANJANA'S CITY

Nārada continued the tale : Having thus got her husband, Puranjana, under her thumb by her coquetry, great King, Puranjani enjoyed herself and gave him pleasure. He welcomed her, who came to him with a beaming face, after a bath and a hearty meal and

adorning herself invitingly. Embraced by her, with his arms clasped round her neck, his senses overpowered by her whispered endearments, he who had relinquished himself wholly into the hands of a woman, was not conscious of the inexorable ebbing away of his life by day and by night. As he, proud in the consciousness of his strength, and ambitious, lay on his priceless couch pillow-ing his head on his queen's arm, he, swamped by ignorance, locked upon her, not upon his own true Self, as the supreme object of desire. As he thus spent his time in dalliance with her, his mind fouled by passion, his youth passed away like a split second, great King (1-5).

The emperor Puranjana begot on Puranjani eleven hundred sons; by that time half his life was over. He had, too, a hundred and ten daughters, known as Pouranjanis, who enhanced the good repute of their parents, O Patriarch, by their virtuous and generous disposition. The ruler of the Pānchālas found wives for his sons, through whom their father's line was extended; and he found suitable husbands for his daughters. His sons had a hundred sons each, through whom the progeny of Puranjana multiplied rapidly in the Pānchālas. By his egoistic attachment to his children and their heirs, and to his home, wealth and dependants, he fell under the bondage of the senses. Prompted by many desires, he took sacrificial vows and worshipped the gods, the manes and the lords of the elementals by offering many horrid sacrifices to them, involving the slaughter of animals, as you have been doing (6-11).

While he, thus attached to his family, remained careless of the welfare of his own soul, he reached that age which is unwelcome to those who are fond of women. There is a famous ruler of the Gandharvas known as Chandavega, O King; and there are three hundred and sixty strong Gandharvas who obey his will. There are also three hundred and sixty Gandharvis, equally strong. These, of whom one half are black and the other half white in complexion, couple with the Gandharvas and plunder by rotation that city built with every facility for enjoyment. When the followers of Chandavega began harrying the city of Puranjana, Prajāgara opposed them. For a hundred years that strong Governor of Purajana's

fortified city fought the seven hundred and twenty Gandharvas single-handed. When his faithful lieutenant, thus fighting against odds, grew weaker and weaker, Puranjana, his relations, and the people of the realm and the city, were distraught with anxiety. But Puranjana continued to indulge in trivial pleasures. Sustaining himself on tributes collected in the Pāṇchālās by his retinue, he, a slave to women, did not realize his peril (12-18).

A certain woman, daughter of Kāla (time), wandered all over the three worlds looking for a husband, but none would take her, O Prāchinabarhis. She was known to all men as Durbhagā (the luckless) because she ruined the beauty of the body. It was she that had granted a boon to the sage king Pūru, being pleased with him for having chosen her. Once, when she was on her rounds, she found me, who had by chance come to this world from the Brahmaloḥa, and though she knew that I was vowed to celibacy, asked me to marry her, being blinded by passion. Enraged at my rejection of her, she laid on me a great and grievous curse, saying, 'Since you have rebuffed me, you shall never remain anywhere for any length of time, O sage.' Foiled in her object, the unmarried woman sought out, at my suggestion, a great Chief of the Yavanas named Bhaya, and asked him to marry her. She told him, 'I ask for your hand in marriage, O valiant Chief of the Yavanas, because I love you. For no one is denied what he desires of you. Both he who does not give, when asked, and he who does not receive, when offered, what, according to the Śāstra and the usages of the world, may be given by the one and received by the other, are stupidly obstinate, and good men are sorry for them. Therefore, good sir, bestow your grace on me, and accept me, I beseech you. This is a man's supreme duty—that he show sympathy to those in distress' (19-26).

The Chief of the Yavanas, hearing what the daughter of time, the destroyer, said, answered her with a laugh, being intent on doing the secret will of the gods. 'I have had an inspiration, and know who is the husband for you. Since you bring ill-luck, and are looked upon with scorn, no one will welcome you. You had better

take your fill of pleasure, consorting on the sly with all living creatures, who are the product of their own *karma*. Go with my army, and you shall destroy all creatures. Here is my brother Prajvāra. You will be my sister. With you two I shall range over the whole world unseen, with my formidable army' (27-30).

CHAPTER XXVIII

PURANJANA TAKEN CAPTIVE

Nārada went on with his story : The army of Bhaya, which executed the purposes of fate, ranged over the whole earth in the company of Prajvāra and Kāla-kanyā, O Barhiṣman. Once they led a terrific attack against Puranjana's city, which was rich in all earthly enjoyments and was still guarded by the serpent, though enfeebled by age. And Kāla-kanyā preyed upon Puranjana's city ; the man who fell to her was sucked dry. While she was emasculating that city, the troops of the Yavana (Bhaya) entered it through the gateways on all sides and inflicted great suffering on the people. When the city was thus harried, Puranjana, in his egoistic attachment to it and to his family, suffered many and sore afflictions. Hugged by Kāla-kanyā and bereft of his beauty, his sovereign power destroyed by the Gandharvas and the Yavanas, he was miserable ; because, having lost the power of discrimination, he still hankered after pleasures. His sons and grandsons, retainers and officials turned against him and showed him scant regard, while his wife no longer loved him. Finding himself in the power of Kāla-kanyā, and the Pāṇchālas pillaged by the enemy, and seeing no way out of his troubles, he was plunged in endless care. Still yearning after pleasures, though they had lost their savour thanks to Kāla-kanyā, the forlorn king, who had forfeited his lasting good and lost the affection of his wife and children, continued still to love them, and decided with great reluctance to abandon the city, which, ravaged by Kāla-kanyā, had fallen to the Gandharvas and Yavanas (1-10).

Bhaya's elder brother Prajvāra then came on the scene and burnt the city, desiring to do his brother's pleasure. When the city was burning, the head of the family suffered greatly along with the mistress of the house, the other members of the family, their servants and dependants, as well as the citizens. When the city was in the toils of Kāla-kanyā, and his own house besieged by the Yavanas, and he himself pressed hard by Prajvāra, the Governor of the city was in distress. Trembling violently from his intense suffering and unable to discharge his duty of protection, he wanted to escape from it, like the snake caught in the hollow of a tree on fire. All his strength drained out of him by the Gandharvas, his limbs debilitated, and his exit blocked by the enemy Yavana forces, he wailed aloud, O King (11-15).

When the time came for parting from wife and children and all else, the master of the household (Puranjana) was doleful, thinking of his daughters, sons and grandsons, his daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and attendants, and of such things as houses, wealth and goods, with which he was connected by the tenuous link of ownership, as in his folly he still identified himself with them, entertaining the notions of 'me' and 'mine'. 'When I am dead, how will my wife, left unprotected with a large family, and grieving for her children, manage to live? She is so devoted to me that she does not eat unless I eat, or bathe unless I do. My anger terrifies her; when I scold her, she does not so much as open her mouth from fear. When I do something foolish, she makes me see my mistake. When I go abroad, she becomes thin with grief. Though she has valiant sons, I doubt whether she will be able to go on doing her duty by the household. And how will my poor sons and daughters, helpless like those in a broken ship at sea, maintain themselves when I am gone?' (16-21).

While thus he cravenly lamented his fate, in a way that was unbecoming of him, he who was known as Bhaya came, resolved to seize him. As he was being led away by the Yavanas to their own abode, bound like an animal, his followers ran after him, wailing in deep distress. When the serpent, which had been penned up in the city by the Yavanas, went away abandoning it, it

crumbled down and became one with the elements. As he (Puranjana) was being dragged away by the powerful Yavana, he did not remember his old friend and well-wisher, though he was ever with him, because his mind was swamped by ignorance. The sacrificial beasts that he had pitilessly slaughtered, hacked and hewed at him with axes in their anger, remembering the torments he had inflicted on them. Plunged in incurable ignorance, his memory of happy days wholly wiped out, his heart vitiated by his attachment to his wife, he experienced untold miseries for many years. And then, as his thoughts still ran on a woman, he was reborn as a beautiful woman in the house of the ruler of Vidarbha, a lion among kings. Malayadhwaja, the Pāndya, conqueror of the cities of the foe, married that daughter of Vidarbha, who was to be won by valour, after defeating many Kshatriyas in battle. To him she bore a dark-eyed daughter, and after her, seven sons who became rulers in the Dravida country. Each one of them had millions of sons; it is by their progeny that the entire earth will be ruled to the end of the Manvantara and beyond. Agastya married his daughter, his first child, who was firm in her vows; she bore him a son, Drdhachyuta, whose son was the sage Idmavāha (22-32).

Dividing the kingdom between his sons, the royal sage Malayadhwaja went to the Kulāchala from the desire to worship Krishna. Abandoning her children, home and enjoyments, the King of Vidarbha's daughter, whose eyes were wine, went with him as the moonlight goes with the moon. In that region run the rivers Chandravasā, Tāmraparṇī and Vatodakā. Washing off all impurities both within and without with their sacred waters every day, and living on tuber, seed, root, fruit and flower, on leaves and grasses and water, he devoted himself to austerities which gradually wasted the body. With an equable mind, he freed himself from the sway of the pairs of opposites, heat and cold, wind and rain, hunger and thirst, likes and dislikes, happiness and misery. Burning up the residual impressions left by his passions by means of his austerities and devoted worship of the Lord, and controlling his senses, life-breath, and mind by the practice of the internal and

external disciplines, he meditated on his own soul as the Brahma. He sat motionless as a post in the same place for a hundred celestial years; his mind, filled with love for Vāsudeva, was oblivious of all else. He realized the soul in the body itself, by seeing its essential difference from the body which it pervades and in which it functions as the witness of the mental modes—as in a dream (the dreamer sees his own body)—and ceased from all activity. He realized his soul as the unconditioned Brahma, and the attributeless Brahma as his soul, by the light of pure wisdom, illuminating all that is, which was vouchsafed him by the Guru, Who was the exalted Lord Hāri Himself. And then he abandoned that consciousness too and was freed from the transmigratory existence (33-42).

The King of Vidarbha's daughter, who looked upon her husband as her god, lovingly served Malayadhwaja, while he was thus devoting himself to the practice of the highest *dharma*. Clad in rags, emaciated by her austerities, her hair matted, she shone by her husband's side like the smokeless flame by the glowing embers. Not realizing that her beloved husband was dead, because he remained firm in his seat, she waited upon him as usual. It was when she worshipped the feet of her lord and found that there was no warmth in them that she was alarmed like a doe that had strayed from the herd. Bemoaning her own miserable fate, left unfriended in the forest, she wept aloud, bathing her breasts with the tears of distress. 'Get up, do, O royal sage, you should protect the ocean-girdled earth, which goes in dread of marauders and unrighteous Kshatriyas.' Thus mourning her lord, whom she had followed to the forest, the gentle dame fell at his feet and wept, her tears streaming. Making a pyre of logs and placing her husband's body on it, she set fire to it and made lament, resolved to follow him in death (43-50).

At that moment there appeared before her, in the guise of a Brahmana, her companion of ages past, who was possessed of the knowledge of the Self, and he spoke consoling words that fell sweetly on the ear of the weeping woman. The Brahmana asked her, 'What is your name? Whose daughter are you? What was he to

you, who is laid out here, and whom you mourn? Do you recollect me as the companion in whom you found all delight before creation started? Do you at least recollect, my friend, that you had a companion whom you did not really know? Leaving me, you went away seeking a place where you could enjoy the pleasures of life, for which you longed. You and I, O noble one, were swans, who were companions and had our abode in the Mānasa lake. Before that we were homeless for a thousand years. Abandoning me, my friend, you went down to the earth avid for the pleasures of the senses. And roaming there you found a city built by a woman. It had five pleasure-gardens, nine gateways, one sentinel, three ramparts, six merchant families, and five emporia; it was built of five materials and had a woman for mistress. The 'gardens' stand for the objects of the five senses, the 'gateways' for the nine physical loci of the faculties of perception and action, O capable one. The ramparts are fire, water and earth; the six merchants are the sense organs joined with the mind. The emporia are the organs of action; the five gross elements are the imperishable material of which that city is built. The man who has entered it, being under the sway of his intellect, does not realize who he is. Having entered that city, you succumbed to the wiles of the woman and engaged in dalliance with her, forgetting the fact of your identity with the Brahma, known through the Veda, and by reason of that attachment have fallen into this miserable state, O capable one (51-59).

'You are not the daughter of the King of Vidarbha, nor is the valiant one here your husband. Nor were you the husband of Puranjani who kept you confined in the city with the nine gates. What you thought was a male and what you now think of as a chaste female, are both non-existent, in fact, being illusions produced by me; for we are both pure spirit. Let me show you our true state. You are none other than Me; and I am you yourself; understand this clearly. The seers do not find the least difference between us. Even as a man sees his own body as two different things when reflected in a mirror and in another man's eye, so are we two perceived as different.' The swan of the Mānasa lake

(the soul in man), thus awakened to the truth by his fellow (the Paramātmān), recovered consciousness of his Self, and, pondering long, attained knowledge of his true status (as the Brahma), the recollection of which had been lost by his alienation from his companion. This knowledge of the truth about the Self has been conveyed to you, O Barhishman, by means of an allegory; for the glorious Lord Who protects the world loves to keep such things a mystery (60-65).

CHAPTER XXIX

NĀRADA EXPLAINS THE ALLEGORY

Prāchīnabarhis said: 'We are unable to comprehend what you, O blessed one, have said. Knowers of the Self no doubt understand it; but we, whose minds are bemused by addiction to *karma*, do not' (1).

Nārada replied: 'You should know that Puranjana is the *jīva* who generates by his past *karma* the body which he occupies, and which may have one, two, three, four or many feet, or none. The companion of the *jīva*, who was described by the name Avijnāta (the Unknown) is the Supreme Lord, Whom men do not know by name, activity or attribute. When the *jīva* wanted to enjoy the products of the *gunas* of Prakṛti, he chose by preference the human body with nine apertures, two hands and two feet. The woman (Puranjani) is none other than the intellect, to which are due such notions as 'me' and 'mine'. It is by identifying himself with the intellect that the *jīva*, remaining in the body, experiences the world of objects through the senses. The male companions (of the woman) are the whole body of organs through which the *jīva* perceives and acts; their female attendants are their various activities. Because of its five functions, the vital air is spoken of as the five-headed serpent. You should know that the commander of immense strength, the Eleventh, of whom mention was made, is the mind, that directs the two sets of organs. The Pāñchālas are the five realms peopled by the objects of the senses, amidst which stands the city with the nine gates. These nine are the eyes, the

nostrils, the ears, the penis, and the anus—which are located in pairs—and the mouth. It is by these openings that the *jīva* ventures out in the world of the senses, using the appropriate faculty. The eyes, the nostrils and the mouth are the gateways opening to the east; the left ear opens to the north, the right ear to the south. What were described as the western gates are the penis and the anus located in the bottom of the body. *Khad-yotā* ('firefly') and *Āvirmukhī* ('having a bright opening') which were described as being located together, are the left and the right eye. What was spoken of as 'Vibhrājita' is the world of colours. Through the eyes the *jīva* perceives colours with the help of the faculty of vision. *Nalinī* and *Nālinī* are the two nostrils. 'Sourabha' is the world of smells. 'Avadhūta' is the faculty of smell. 'Mukhyā' is the mouth; 'Vipaṇa' is the faculty of speech and 'Rasajña' (or 'Rasavit') the faculty of taste. 'Āpaṇa' is the world of speech and 'Bahūdāna' stands for all kinds of food. 'Pitrhū' is the left ear, 'Devahū' the right. The *Sāstras* that expound the way of involvement in the worldly life, and those that teach the way of withdrawal, are together described as 'Pāñchāla'. It is through the faculty of hearing, here described as 'Srutadhara', that one obtains knowledge of the *Sāstras* and goes along 'the way of the gods' or 'the way of the manes'. 'Āsurī', the gate on the west (that is, at the bottom), is the penis, through which access is had to 'Grāmaka', the pleasures of sex. The vagina is described as 'Durmada', and the anus as 'Nirrti' (death). 'Vaiśāsa' stands for hell, the place of torments, while the anus is called 'lubdhaka' (hunter). And now I will tell you who the two blind men are. They are the hand and the foot. It is with them that a man walks and works. The 'inner apartments' is the heart. 'Vishūchi' (or 'Vishūchīna') is the name given to the mind. It is by identifying himself with the qualities—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—of the mind that a man is in a state of serene happiness, or boisterous high spirits, or apathetic dullness (2-16).

'Whenever the intellect is subjected to some disturbance (as in the dream state), or itself activates the faculties (as in the waking state), the *jīva*, affected by its

qualities, perforce identifies itself with those activities, even though it is in its nature merely a witness of the operations of the intellect. The chariot spoken of is the dream-body, with the organs of perception for horses. It seems to move as swiftly and inexorably as the year, though in truth it is motionless. It has for wheels the two classes of actions (those which are meritorious, and those which are sinful). The three *guṇas* are its flag-staffs, the five vital airs are its knots. It has the mind for reins, the intellect for charioteer, the heart for the seat occupied by the chariot-warrior, and the pairs of opposites for the poles to which the yoke is attached. The five receptacles (for weapons) are the worlds of the senses. The seven fenders are the constituent elements of the body. And its 'five ways of moving' are the organs of action. With the ten organs and the mind for his retinue, the *jīva*, delighting in unlawful sense-pleasures ('the five kinds of slaughter'), chases (in the dream) those phantom pleasures, like one pursuing a mirage. The year, which symbolizes the passage of time, is spoken of as Chandavega. The Gandharvas and the Gandharvīs are the days and nights, three hundred and sixty in all, which make up the year and which by their revolutions dissipate men's lives. Kāla-kanyā ('daughter of time') is none other than old age. Death, here spoken of as the Chief of the Yavanas, adopted her as his sister, to compass the destruction of the world. The Yavanas, who were described as his mobile corps, are the mental sufferings and the bodily ills that afflict men. Prajvāra is the ague of two kinds (hot and cold), which is violent in its onset and causes great misery (17-23).

'Thus tormented by the manifold ills caused by the gods, the world and one's own body, the *jīva* remains in the body for a hundred years, enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and looking with a possessive eye on the body and its adjuncts. While he is in truth free from all limiting adjuncts, he attributes to himself the properties of the vital airs, the organs and the mind, and dwelling with longing on trivial pleasures, is busy with works. So long as the *jīva* does not realize his own soul as the Supreme Lord, the Mentor, and remains attached

to the objects of the senses, though in truth he is self-luminous, he, by thus identifying himself with the *guṇas*, goes on helplessly doing works of a *sāttvic*, *tāmasic* or *rājasic* character, and is reborn accordingly. Sometimes he is born into the worlds of light, because of his *sāttvic karmas*; sometimes (as the consequence of his *rājasic karmas*) he takes births wherein he experiences the weariness of *karma* and reaps only grief; or he is born to a life of total ignorance and intense sorrow (as the result of *tāmasic karmas*). One may be born as a man, a woman or a eunuch, as a god, a human being or a member of the lower creation, because his intellect is clouded by ignorance. Birth is determined by *guṇa* and *karma*. Just as a hungry dog goes pitifully from door to door and takes what luck brings him, either a beating or food, so the *jīva*, dominated by desires, goes, as the result of following worthy or unworthy means, to heaven or to hell or to the world of men, there to enjoy the fruits, both pleasant and unpleasant, that his *karmas* have earned for him. Even if there might be ways of warding off the sufferings due to particular causes, it is impossible to ensure against all or any of the sufferings that might be caused by any of the three agencies, the gods, the world, or his own body (or mind). All endeavours to ward off grief or suffering are like the act of a man who, finding his head-load a great burden, shifts it on to his shoulder. A *karma* by itself cannot completely counteract the consequences of another *karma*, since the *karmas*, whose effects are sought to be annulled, and the *karmas* undertaken in this behalf are both equally the product of ignorance; it is like a dream within a dream, O flawless one. Though the world is unreal, the transmigratory existence does not cease for the *jīva* any more than do the experiences that a man undergoes in a dream, because he is saddled with a mind (24-35).

‘Since ignorance involves in *samsāra* with its endless miseries the *jīva*, whose supreme gain would be the realization of the *Ātman*, release from that ignorance can be won only by whole-hearted devotion to the Guru. Sustained devotion directed towards the exalted Lord Vāsudeva in the right way soon produces aversion to the pleasures of the senses, and enlightenment. Such devo-

tion, being inspired by the tale of the glories of Achyuta, comes quickly, O King, to him who hears or recites it constantly and with faith. Where the devotees of the Lord foregather, with unsullied hearts, eager to talk and hear of His manifold glories, there flows many a stream all around, running with the pure nectar of the glories of the Destroyer of Madhu proclaimed by the saintly; and those who absorb it with attentive ears and feel no satiety, will never know, O King, hunger, thirst, fear, sorrow or delusion. Men afflicted constantly by these disabilities that are natural to the human condition, do not (without such inspiration) find joy in that great ocean of nectar, the tale of Hari. The Lord Paramount over the patriarchs (Brahmā), the exalted Lord Girīśa Himself, Manu, Dakṣha and other patriarchs, the lifelong celibates, Sanaka and the rest, Marīchi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha and all other masters of the Vedic lore, down to me, have not up to now been able to see directly the Supreme Lord, the Witness in the hearts of all beings, though we are skilled in the resources of language and have assiduously sought to know Him through the practice of austerities, worship, and concentration of mind. Those who explore the vast and endless ocean of the revealed word, and worship the divinities circumscribed by the traits described in the Vedic hymns, do not know the Transcendent Lord. He on whom the Lord bestows His grace, because he has meditated on Him long and intensely, forthwith resigns all concern with the affairs of the world and the way of works taught in the Veda. Therefore, O Barhiṣṭhman, you must not be so lacking in discrimination as to look upon those objects (spoken of in the Veda) as the supreme goal of human endeavour, since they do not really touch the core of reality, but are merely pleasing to the ear. Those men of impure minds who maintain that the Veda teaches the Way of *Karma* do not know its true import, which is one's own essential Self, Wherein is established the Lord Janārdana. Having covered the entire earth with *darbha* grass laid endwise pointing east, you have become arrogant from the self-esteem produced by having slaughtered huge numbers of animals (in your sacrifices), and you do not

know what *karma* or that wisdom which lies beyond it really is. That alone is *karma* by which Hari is propitiated, and that alone is wisdom which teaches one to love Him. Hari is the Self in all creatures, their Supreme Lord, and Causeless Cause ; and His feet are the sanctuary where alone in this life men may find safety. He is, too, one's own Self, than Which nothing is dearer, and from Which there is not the least cause for fear. He who knows this, alone truly knows ; and he who knows this truth is himself the Guru and Hari too' (36-51).

Nārada went on : ' I have so far answered your question, O best of men. But listen carefully. I will now impart to you a secret and well-ascertained truth. " Look for that deer browsing in a flower garden to which it is greatly attached, having found a mate there ; moving about as it greedily drinks in the sweet hum of swarms of bees, it is unmindful of the rapacious wolves ahead, while a hunter's shaft pierces it in the back." The following is the plain meaning of this verse : " You should, O King, realize that you, leading the householder's life with women whose charms are evanescent as flowers, and hotly pursuing petty pleasures, like those of the palate and of sex, which are the fruits of *karma* prompted by desire, have been so absorbed in making love and delightedly listening to the chatter of women and children that falls pleasantly on the ear like the music of bees, that you have been oblivious of the passage of time, made up of such aggregates of moments as days and nights, which feed on you like a pack of wolves, consuming your life ; while death, like a hunter stalking his prey, has been following you all the time, and will suddenly strike at you from afar, and cleave your heart in twain with his secret dart." Ponder well on this animal life that you have been leading, and still the mind in the heart, and the outward-ranging senses in the mind ; give up the householder's life where you hear nothing but the libidinous talk of sensualists, propitiate the Lord, Who is the refuge of all creatures, and thus you may gradually free yourself from all worldly attachments.' (52-55).

The King (Prāchīnabarhis) here made a submission.

'I have heard and carefully considered the truths that you have expounded, O Brahman. They were apparently not known to those who instructed me (in the way of works); would they have withheld them from me if they knew? You have removed the great difficulties caused by their teaching, which stood in the way of my understanding those truths (about the Ātman). Even the sages are unable to throw light on what is beyond the reach of the senses. But still there is one doubt that bothers me. "Leaving here the body by means of which the *jīva* performs actions, he goes to the other world, where he experiences in another body the consequences thereof": this is what those who know the Veda maintain invariably. But the *karma* enjoined by the Veda goes out of sight once it is over and done with, and we see no more of it' (56-59).

Nārada replied: 'It is with the same body with which the *jīva* performs actions here that he enjoys the fruits thereof in the next world. That is the subtle body, which remains uninterruptedly with him, and of which the mind is the principal constituent; just like what happens in a dream, where the dreamer, unmindful of his living body that lies asleep, experiences the impressions of *karma* imbedded in the mind, with a body that may be like it or may be of a different kind. When a man is so attached to a body that he thinks of it as "me" and of those who are connected through it as "mine", he comes to identify himself egoistically with the actions accomplished by its means; that is the cause of his being born again. Just as one infers the intervention of the mind from the way in which the different organs of perception and action behave at any time, even so actions done in a previous birth may be inferred from the present tendencies of the mind. When a man's mind grasps (say, in a dream or a reverie) something of a form, kind or mode that he had never known, seen or heard of before in this life, you may be sure that this *jīva*, saddled with a subtle body, has had this experience in a previous life. What a man has never experienced will leave no impression on the mind. Besides—note this well, and God bless you!—a man's mind itself indicates the nature of his previous births as well as of those that are to come,

be they of an exalted character or the reverse of it. When something is experienced by the mind, the like of which no one could have possibly seen or heard of in the context of that particular time, place or action, it must be explained by extraneous factors (60-67).

'As all men are endowed with mind, all objects of the senses enter it at one time or other as things to be desired, and in due course they go out in groups. In the mind wholly established in *sattva* and engaged in rapt meditation on the Lord, the entire universe sometimes appears as joined with it, just as the node appears to be joined with the moon (when in eclipse). So long as the subtle body—the product of the *gunas*, which has existed from eternity, and is a complex of intellect, mind, faculties of perception and action, and subtle elements—survives, the connection of the *jīva* with the body, through the notion of "me" and "mine", will not be severed. In the state of sleep, in a fit of fainting, in the stupor of unbearable grief, at the time of death, and in high fever, the "I-consciousness" is not apparent, because the senses are paralysed. Neither in the womb nor in infancy is seen the full blossoming of the ego—even as on the night of the new moon the moon's orb is not seen—as it is seen in the young man, because the senses (and the mind) have not attained in the former the fullness that in the latter feeds the ego. Though the objective world is not real, the cycle of birth and death does not cease for the man whose mind lingers longingly on objects of pleasure, even as the experience of disasters in a dream does not cease so long as the dream lasts (68-73).

'The subtle body, the product of the *gunas*, which are composed of the five elements and expanded by the eleven evolutes, is called the *jīva* when it is endowed with consciousness. It is by means of this subtle body that the *jīva* takes to himself or relinquishes the gross body, and it is because of it that he knows joy, sorrow, fear, pleasure and pain. Just as the caterpillar does not, while moving from one blade of grass to another, lose its hold on that which it is leaving, so the dying man does not give up his attachment to his body, till he finds another body, the *karmas* that had been responsible for

the previous body having been exhausted. It is the mind, O King, that is the cause of the birth and death of all creatures. When the *jīva*, dwelling with longing on the pleasures of the senses, is constantly preoccupied with works, it is bound by such actions performed by the body, so long as it is under the sway of nescience. To rid yourself of nescience, you should devote yourself wholeheartedly to Hari, seeing the universe as one with Him, because He is the Cause of its origin, being and destruction' (74-79).

Maitreya said: Nārada, first of the devotees of the Lord, having thus expounded the truth about the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord to him (Prāchīnabarhis), took leave of him and returned to the world of the perfected. The sage-king Prāchīnabarhis went to Kapilāśrama to practise austerities, charging his sons with the duty of looking after the welfare of his people. There that man of resolution, having given up all attachments, devoted himself with single-mindedness to the lotus feet of Govinda, and was by reason of that devotion elevated to a state of equality with Him (80-82).

He who hears, or retails to others, this allegorical account of the passage of the soul, given out by the celestial sage, is freed from the subtle body, O blameless one. He who absorbs this teaching, which was imparted by the first of celestial sages, which sanctifies the world by virtue of the glory of Mukunda proclaimed in it, and which frees the mind from its impurities and bestows the highest blessings, is delivered from all bondage and wanders never more in the maze of *samsāra*. I learnt (from my Guru) this wonderful allegory bearing upon the Self, which explains how the sway of the ego over the man who is wedded to the intellect is done away with, and removes the doubts about what happens (to the doer of *karma*) in the next world (83-85).

CHAPTER XXX

THE LORD BLESSES THE PRACHETASES

Vidura asked : ' What did the sons of Prāchīnabarhis, whom you mentioned, O Brahman, gain by propitiating Hari with the singing of the hymn taught by Rudra ? The sons of Prāchīnabarhis, having by chance met with Giriśa and become the disciples of Him Who is dear to the Lord of Liberation, must have assuredly attained liberation ; but what did they achieve here or elsewhere, before that happened, O disciple of Bṛhaspati ?' (1-2).

Maitreya replied : The Prachetases, intent on carrying out their father's orders, plunged into the waters of the ocean, and propitiated Hari by worshipping Him with the recital of the *japa* and the practice of austerities for ten thousand years. Thereupon the Primordial Lord appeared before them, taking a form compact of pure *sattva*, and dispelling their weariness by His radiant glory. Mounted on the shoulders of Suparṇa, He looked like a cloud on a peak of Meru. He was clad in yellow silks and wearing the jewel (Kausthubha) on the neck, which lit up all the directions. The face and the cheeks shone with the many-tinted brilliance of the gold-set jewellery, and He wore a splendid crown. He was armed with His eight weapons, and waited upon by His attendants and by the sages and the principal gods, while Garuda, as a Kinnara for the nonce, sang His glory (with the music of his wings). He was covered with the garland of wild flowers, which in its splendour vied with the Goddess Śrī, who was ensconced between His eight long and sleek arms. Appearing in this guise before them, the Primordial Lord addressed the sons of Barhiṣmat, who had sought refuge in Him, in a voice that recalled the thunder, as His eyes rested on them graciously (3-7).

The Lord said : ' Ask for any boon you like of Me, and may all that is good be yours, O Princes, who all follow the same Dharma by reason of the love that you bear towards each other. I am pleased with you because of this mutual love. He who remembers you every day at dawn and dusk will come to look upon his brothers

as upon his own self and be full of affection for all creatures. I shall bestow on those who praise Me with a collected mind by singing the *Rudragīta* in the morning and the evening, all that they desire as well as an intelligence that will promote their highest good. Since you gladly agreed to execute your father's command, your splendid fame shall spread through all the worlds. A famous son shall be born to you, who will in no way be inferior to Brahmā in the possession of virtues, and who will fill the three worlds with his progeny (8-12).

'A girl-child with eyes lovely as the lotus was born to Kandu of Pramlochā. Abandoned by the latter, she was adopted by the trees, O princes. As she cried from hunger, the King (of trees and herbage), the moon-god, put in her mouth out of compassion his forefinger from which nectar flows. Obeying the injunction of your father, who, in accordance with My wishes, wants you to beget progeny, you should marry her without delay. The lovely woman shall be the devoted wife of all of you, who are all wedded to the same Dharma and are alike in disposition; and in these respects she too will resemble you. Possessing irresistible strength and power, you shall enjoy for a million celestial years the fruits of earth and heaven by My grace. Then, all the impurities in your heart having been burnt up by your unwaning devotion to Me, and having developed aversion to the worldly life, which is no better than hell, you will reach My abode. The householder's life is no bondage to those who dedicate all actions to Me and who spend their time in speaking and hearing of Me. By reason of the knowers of the Veda expatiating on My glories. I, the Omniscient Lord, enter the hearts of those who hear, with an ever-new appeal. And when they have got Me, they have realized the Brahma; since they are freed once for all from delusion, joy and sorrow alike' (13-20).

Maitreya said: When Janārdana, Who bestows all that men desire, said this, the Prachetases, freed from ignorance and passion and made pure by setting eyes on Him, praised with joined palms, and in a voice choked with emotion, the Lord Who is the Friend of all creatures. The Prachetases said: 'We offer our repeated salutations to Him Who dispels all sufferings, Whose magni-

ficent qualities and names are proclaimed (by the Veda) as the sovereign means to the realization of all the ends of life, Whose speed outruns mind and speech, Whose way is not comprehended by any of the senses. Salutations to Him Who, established in His essence, is immaculate Peace and Bliss, but on Whom, because of the mind, the phantom of duality is projected. Salutations to Him Who, for the purpose of the creation and preservation and destruction of the worlds, takes to Himself forms composed of the *guṇas* of Māyā. Salutations to Hari Whose form is one of pure *sattva* and knowledge of Whom effects the destruction of *samsāra*; to Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, and the Protector of His devotees. Salutations to Thee, O Lord of the lotus eyes and the lotus navel, Who wearest the lotus garland, and Whose feet resemble the lotus. Salutations to Thee That art clothed in raiment of a dazzling purity, and tawny like the lotus filament. We make our prostrations to Him in Whom all creation abides, who is the Witness of all hearts. The exalted Lord has vouchsafed us, oppressed by the miseries of existence, sight of this blessed form that wipes out all suffering; what else can we ask of Thy compassion? This much of grace the all-powerful should bestow on the humble whom they love, O Thou That destroyest all that is inauspicious, that they should remember them in their hour of need with the thought, "These are mine". That remembrance will bring them all happiness; (besides) how could He Who is seated in the hearts of even the humblest of His creatures, as their Inner Controller, not know what desires we, His devotees, who have desires, entertain? This, O Lord of the worlds, is itself the boon that we coveted—that the exalted Lord, Who shows the way to liberation and Who is Himself the goal of our endeavour, should be pleased with us (21-30).

'Yet we would have one boon of Thee, O Lord, That art beyond (Prakṛti) the primary cause. There is no end to Thy glorious attributes, and that is why Thou art called Ananta. When the *pārijāta* tree is readily accessible, the black bee will not go to any other. Having reached Thy feet, what else is there that we could ask for? So long as we, deluded by Thy Māyā, wander

in the maze of *samsāra* by reason of our *karmas*, may it be given to us to enjoy, in every birth, the company of those who have supreme attachment to Thee. We do not regard heaven or liberation itself as equal in value to a moment's association with the Lord's devotees ; what need then be said of the blessings that men crave for ? Who that is terrified of *samsāra* will not long to meet Thy devotees who wander on foot from one sacred place to another intent on sanctifying them ? At those gatherings are heard the edifying stories about Thee which slake the thirst for worldly enjoyments. Enmity or fear towards any creature is unknown there ; while the exalted Lord Narayana Himself, the Goal of the renouncers, is repeatedly extolled there, by those who have freed themselves from all attachments, in the holy discourses they deliver (31-37).

' We ourselves, O Lord, have as the result of a momentary contact with the Lord Bhava, Thy beloved companion, found this day the Goal of our endeavour in Thee, the Master-physician Who has the cure for the intractable malady of birth and death. Our careful study of the Vedas, our efforts to propitiate by devoted service our Gurus, the Brahmanas and others grown old in age and wisdom, the sincere and ungrudging respect we have shown to all noble souls, to our well-wishers and our brothers, to all creatures in fact, and the severe austerities we practised, plunged in the waters of the ocean for long years, without food—we pray that all this might serve for the gratification of Thee, the All-pervading Lord, the Inner Ruler in all creatures. Since Manu, the Self-existent (Brahmā), the great Lord Bhava, and others whose hearts are pure because of their austerities and enlightenment, exalt Thee, though they do not know the full extent of Thy glory, let us, too, praise Thee according to our lights. We make our prostrations to Thee That art the Lord Vāsudeva, Who has assumed a form of pure *sattva* and in Whose eyes all are equal, That art, too, the Immaculate Ruler within, and the Transcendent Lord ' (38-42).

Maitreya said : Extolled thus by the Prachetases, Hari, Who loves them that look to Him for refuge, was pleased. He said, ' It shall be as you wish ' ; and He

of the limitless puissance returned to His own Abode, as they gazed at Him with unsated eyes, all unwilling to let Him pass from their sight. The Prachetases then issued from the waters of the ocean. They were incensed to see the earth hidden by trees so tall that they seemed intent on blocking the way to heaven. In their wrath they blew fire and air from their mouths to denude the earth of all vegetation, as does Rudra Who breathes fire at the dissolution of the worlds. Seeing the trees being reduced to ashes, the Grandsire came there and pacified the sons of Barhishmat with cogent reasoning. The trees that remained undestroyed were in great terror ; as advised by the Self-existent, they gave their daughter to the Prachetases. They married Mārishā, as directed by Brahmā ; and he (Daksha), who had been the son of Brahmā (in a previous birth), was now reborn as her son, as the consequence of the disrespect towards the Great God (Siva) that he had been guilty of. It was he who became known to fame (by the same name) as Daksha and begot progeny after his own heart in the Chākshusha Manvantara, when the former creation had been destroyed by time. The moment he was born he obscured by his own glory the splendour of all resplendent beings ; and he came to be called Daksha because of his extraordinary efficiency in the performance of *karma*. The Lord Who knows no beginning (Brahmā), consecrated him and entrusted him with the task of furthering the expansion of the created world and its protection. And he allotted their several tasks to the other patriarchs (43-51).

CHAPTER XXXI

NĀRADA'S TEACHING TO THE PRACHETASES

Maitreya said : When in course of time the light of discriminating wisdom dawned upon them, they (the Prachetases), remembered what the Lord had said, and they renounced the world without delay, leaving their wife in the charge of their son. They went to the place on the seashore in the west, where Jājali had attained liberation, to engage there in the inquiry into the Self

through which one arrives at the realization that the *Ātman* is present in all creatures. Nārada, who was worthy of the praises of gods and Asuras alike, saw them there. Established in the right *yogic* posture, they, who had controlled the breath, the mind, speech and sight, sat upright with their minds fixed on the supreme and immaculate Brahma. On seeing him, they got up and prostrated themselves before him; welcoming him, they worshipped him as ordained, and when he was seated comfortably, they spoke to him. The Prachetases said, 'Welcome to you, celestial sage, it is our supreme good fortune that we see you; your movements, like the sun's, are for the welfare of the world. The teaching that we received from the exalted Lord Śiva and from Adhokshaja has been practically forgotten by us in our absorption in the domestic life, O blessed one. Therefore be pleased to rekindle in us that knowledge by which one may realize the one abiding Reality and thus easily cross the otherwise impassable ocean of birth and death' (1-7).

Maitreya said: Requested thus by the Prachetases, the blessed sage Nārada instructed the princes, with his mind intent on the illustrious Lord. Nārada said: 'That alone is the true birth, those are the real *karmas*, that is the worth-while life, and those alone deserve to be called mind and speech, which men utilize in this world for serving the Supreme Lord Hari, Who is the Soul in all that exists. What use are the three births—from parents of spotless purity, from the sacrament of *upana-yana*, and from the taking of sacrificial vows—or the performance of *karmas* ordained by the Vedas, or a length of life that equals that of the gods, or learning, the practice of austerities, the gift of charming speech, mental alertness, an acute intellect, physical strength, the robust functioning of the senses, the control of the breath or other *yogic* achievement, the discursive knowledge that discriminates between the body and the soul, renunciation, the study of the Vedas, or any other means of promoting one's lasting good, if they are not employed for the propitiation of Hari, Who gives even Himself? Of all things to be desired, the Self is in truth the highest and most precious. And Hari is that Self in all creatures,

and He brings them realization thereof ; and He is, too, their best Beloved. Just as by the watering of the roots of the tree, its trunk, boughs and branches flourish, and as the food that sustains life nourishes all the faculties, even so the worship offered to Achyuta serves to propitiate all other deities. As the waters emerge from the sun and in due course merge in it again, as all creatures, moving and stationary, spring from the earth and become one with it, so does the world of the living and the non-living proceed from Hari and merge in Him again. This universe is of the absolute Essence of the Lord, the Soul of the universe, free from all limitations. It is manifested by It sometimes, as the sun's rays are by the sun ; while (at other times) it is quiescent in It ; being in this like the faculties of sense and action, which are active in the waking state but are lulled in slumber. But in the Lord Himself all such error caused by the ego as that which is responsible for the differentiation of the gross and the subtle elements, the organs, the mind and the gods, does not prevail. As in the sky there appear and disappear clouds, darkness and light, so in the Supreme Brahma do Its powers, *Rajas*, *Tamas* and *Sattva*, constituting the flux of life, O Princes. Therefore offer Him worship for its own sake, looking upon Him as none other than your own Self, for He is the One Soul in all creatures and the Supreme Lord ; He is time, Pradhāna and Purusha, and by His power (Consciousness) He eternally repulses the transmigratory flux. Janārdana is quickly propitiated by kindness towards all creatures, contentment with what one has, and cultivation of tranquillity of spirit. Induced by the ever-growing love that good men have for Him, to establish Himself in their hearts, which have been purified by the purging of all desires, the ever-constant Lord (Hari) does not depart from it, any more than the Void therein does, thus showing that He is wholly in the hands of His devotees. But Hari, Who loves the poor that are rich in the possession of Him, and savours with delight the sweetness of their loving adoration, does not accept the worship of those men of mean understanding who are conceited over their learning, wealth, high birth and achievements, and pour scorn

on the saintly souls who look upon nothing as their own. Who that is at all capable of gratitude could bear, even for a moment, to be separated from Him Who, being Himself Perfection, is indifferent to the Goddess Sri, assiduous though she is to win His grace, and cares even less for those, be they kings of men or gods, whose worship of her is prompted by desires, but Who is devoted to His own, and amenable to their will? (8-22).

Maitreya said: Having thus instructed the Prachetases, and related to them other stories bearing on the Lord's greatness, the sage, Brahmā's son, departed to the Brahmaloṇa, O King, And they, too, having heard his purifying discourse on Hari, engaged in contemplation of His feet and reached His abode. I have now related to you, O Kshattā, the story of Nārada's discourse to the Prachetases, which proclaims the greatness of Hari, and which you wished to hear' (23-25).

Srī Suka said (to Parikshit): You have so far heard described the lineage of Uttānapāda, son of Manu. Listen now, O best of Kings, to the story of the family of Priyavrata, who, after learning the Science of the Self from Nārada, went back to rule the earth, and then in due course divided the kingdom among his sons and reached the abode of the exalted Lord. Kshattā, having heard the sanctifying tale which has for its subject the Invincible Lord, told by the son of Kaushārava, was overwhelmed by the love that welled up in his heart for the Lord. With tears in his eyes, he placed on his head the feet of the sage and lodged in his heart the feet of Hari. Vidura told the sage, 'You, great yogi, who are the soul of compassion, have shown me this day the other shore beyond the darkness, where Hari may be found by those who have freed themselves from all possessions' (26-29).

Srī Suka concluded: Saying this, and making his prostrations to him, Vidura took leave of him, and with peace in his heart, departed to Hastināpura, desiring to see his kinsmen. He who listens, O King, to this tale of the Kings whose minds were given to Hari, will obtain length of days, wealth, fame, happiness, sovereign power and the goal that he desires (30-31).

(Here ends the *Fourth Book* of *Srimad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK V*

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF PRIYAVRATA

The King asked : ' How did Priyavrata, the devotee of the Lord, who delighted in the Self, come to be engrossed in the pleasures of domesticity, the cause of the bondage resulting from the performance of actions, and the obscuring of one's own true nature ? Surely men like him, who have freed themselves from worldly attachments, should not be addicted to the home in this way, O best of Brahmanas. For great souls, whose hearts have found supreme contentment in the grateful shade cast by the feet of the illustrious Lord, do not succumb to attachment to the family, O Brahmana sage. I am sore perplexed by the fact that one who was devoted to his wife, home, children and so on, yet achieved perfection and unswerving devotion to Krishna ' (1-4).

Sri Suka answered : You have said well. But those who have yielded themselves to the sweetness of the honey from the lotus feet of the exalted Lord do not as a rule fall away from their chosen path to the supreme good, which lies through delighted absorption in the story of the Lord, Who is dear to His devotees, the great renouncers, though for a time they might be diverted by obstacles. When the Prince Priyavrata was asked by his father to accept the rulership of the kingdom, because in him were to be found all the high qualities required of a king, he was reluctant to do so, though he could not decline, since he feared that he might, by accepting kingly authority which, though illusory, was in its nature alien to the *Ātman*, be bringing about his own downfall. Having achieved, by sedulous service at the feet of Nārada, knowledge of the true nature of the Self, he was about to dedicate himself wholly to contemplation on the Brahma;

* This book is mostly in prose.

he had already resigned into the hands of Vāsudeva, by intense one-pointed absorption in Him, all the fruits of the activities of the different organs (5-6).

When such was the case, the first of the gods, the Self-created, having ascertained the wishes of all the worlds, in his constant concern that His creation, constituted of the *guṇas*, should grow and prosper, came down to the earth from His own Abode, followed by all the Vedas in concrete forms, and His own immediate attendants. Honoured everywhere on the way by the chief gods riding in rows of aerial cars, while His glories were sung by bands of Siddhas, Gandharvas, Sādhya, Chāraṇas and sages, he, who shone like the moon in the sky, reached the valley of the Gandhamādana mountain, lighting it up by his splendour. Looking at his mount, the swan, the celestial sage Nārada saw that it was his father, the exalted Lord Hiranyagarbha, who had come, and he rose up in all haste, along with the father (Manu) and the son (Priyavrata); and making his welcome offerings, he extolled Him with folded hands. And he, the first of all created beings, received the offerings; and as his qualities, his descent into this world, and his surpassing glory were being praised in well-chosen words, he looked at Priyavrata with a gracious smile, and addressed him, O scion of the Bharatas (7-10).

The exalted Lord (Brahmā) said: 'Listen, my child, I speak the bare truth. You should not blame the Lord, Whose ways are inscrutable and Whose commands all of us, Myself, Bhava, your father, this Maharshi, carry out, obedient to His will. No creature can ever unmake what He has made, either by his austerities or by his power of learning or yoga, by his intelligence, his wealth or the *dharma*s he has practised; neither can he do this by his own unaided efforts, nor with the support of others. All creatures, O Priyavrata, bear by the decree of the Lord the body which is the cause of birth, death, the doing of works, sorrow, delusion, perpetual fear, happiness and misery alike. We are all bound, my child, by the unseverable tethering cords—our own *guṇas*, and the *karma*s that have been wrought by them—to the rope that is His revealed word, and do the will of the Supreme Lord, as the quadrupeds held by the nose-cord

do the will of man. We experience the happiness or the misery, my dear, that the Lord allots, in bodies with which He has united us and which are the result of our own *guṇas* and *karmas*, like blind men obeying the man with eyes who leads them. Even he who has won release has to remain in the body experiencing the fruits of *karma* which have begun to take effect, but he does so without egoistic attachment to them, just as the man who has waked up from a dream merely recalls disinterestedly his dream experiences; he does not perform actions or succumb to the residual impressions of past *karmas*, which might lead to the taking of another body. No man is proof against the danger of being caught up in the transmigratory cycle by retiring to the forest, if he has not achieved self-control, since he is still in the company of his six enemies. (On the other hand) what harm can befall the intelligent man in the domestic life, if he has controlled his senses and finds delight only in the Self? The wise man who would overcome the six enemies should strive against them, living the householder's life; when they have been weakened, he may live where he please. It is well-known that the king who has to fight against strong enemies does so from his fortified city. You have vanquished the six enemies, fighting them from that fastness, the lotus feet of the Lord of the lotus-navel; enjoy in this world the blessings that the Supreme Lord has allotted, and then, freed from all attachments, you shall abide in the Self' (11-19).

Śrī Śuka said: Exhorted thus, the great devotee of the Lord received respectfully with bowed head the command of the blessed Master and Mentor of the three worlds, saying, 'Just as it pleaseth Thee'. And the Lord accepted the heartfelt worship offered by Manu, while Priyavrata and Nārada were looking at him without bias or grudge.¹ And he (Brahmā) went back to his own eternal abode, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech, absorbed as he did so in the contemplation of His essential Self, the Brahma, Which is beyond the sphere of activity (20-21).

And Manu, having thus realized his wish by the intercession of the blessed Lord, established his son in

¹ From soreness at their designs having been baulked,

the rulership of the entire world with the approval of the great celestial sage, and renounced his attachment to the householder's life, that poisonous sea of pleasure, which it is so difficult to escape. And the master of the worlds (Priyavrata), thus inducted into the life of *karma* by the wish of the Supreme Lord, ruled the earth, demonstrating his respect and regard for the great Powers like Brahmā, while his heart remained pure, its impurities having been burnt up by the unceasing contemplation of the feet of the Primordial Lord, Whose supreme greatness it is that it destroys the bondage of all the worlds (22-23).

He married Barhishmatī, the daughter of the Patriarch Viśvakarmā, and begot on her ten sons who achieved greatness, being his peers in virtuous disposition, noble qualities, activities, comeliness and valour, and a daughter, the youngest of them all, who was called Ūrjaswatī. The sons all bore the different names of the God of Fire—Āgnīdhra, Mahāvīra, Idhmajihvā, Yajñabāhu, Hiraṇyaretas, Gṛtapsṛstha, Savana, Medhātithi, Vītihotra and Kavi. Three of these, Kavi, Mahāvīra and Savana, remained celibates; from childhood they had cultivated knowledge of the Self and opted for the life of world-renouncing ascetics. Remaining in that stage of life, and ceasing from all worldly activity, those great sages attained unswerving devotion by incessant contemplation on the auspicious lotus feet of the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Abode of all creatures and the sanctuary of those that dread *samsāra*; and seeing in the core of their hearts, purified by that loving devotion, the Lord Who is the Ātman That animates all creatures, they realized the oneness of their own soul therewith, by negating the limiting adjuncts. By another wife he (Priyavrata) had three sons, Uttama, Tāmasa and Raivata, who became lords of the Manvantaras (24-28).

While some of his sons withdrew from the worldly life, as stated above, the high-minded master of the world ruled the earth for one thousand one hundred million years, quelling the enemies of Dharma merely by the thunderous twanging of the bowstring drawn by his sturdy arms, which seemed filled with the strength that brought off resistless deeds of valour;

while he threw himself into the enjoyment of pleasure, as if he were forgetful of his Self, succumbing to the ever-increasing delight that Barhishmatī had in his company, which showed itself in her rising up and going forth to meet him, in lavishing upon him her youthful charms, and in her smiles and looks and lively badinage, imperfectly concealed by her native bashfulness. While the sun-god, going round the mountain of the gods (Meru), illumines the earth up to the Lokāloka mountain, but lights up only one half of it at a time, leaving the other half in darkness, he (Priyavrata), whose super-human prowess was enhanced by his devotion to the Lord, circumambulated Meru seven times in the wake of the sun, travelling in a chariot which was a blaze of light and moved with the speed of the sun, as if he did not like to leave any part of the earth in darkness and had vowed to himself that he would convert night into day (29-30).

The deep ruts made by the wheel-rims of his chariot became, as is well known, the seven seas, and the seven continents were also brought into existence by them. They were named Jambū, Plaksha, Sālmali, Kuśa, Krauncha, Sāka and Pushkara. And now I will tell you of their size. They were all located outside the seas and around them, each of them being twice the size of its predecessor in the order in which I have mentioned them. The seven seas were known respectively as the salt water sea, the cane juice sea, the sea of fermented liquor, the sea of clarified butter, the milky sea, the sea of whey, and the pure water sea. They were like moats round the island continents which they surrounded and were their equal in size; and they were unconnected with each other. In the island continents the husband of Barhishmatī established his dutiful sons Āgnīdhra, Idhmajivā, Yajñabāhu, Hiraṇyaretas, Ghr̥ta-pr̥sh̥t̥tha, Medhātithi, and Vitihoṭra as their rulers in the order named above. He gave his daughter Ūrjaswatī in marriage to Uśanas, to whom she bore a daughter, Devayānī. There is nothing extraordinary in the fact that such exploits are possible for men who have overcome the six disabilities by taking the dust of the feet of the Lord of the immense strides; for even the un-

A time came when he, whose strength and prowess were immeasurable, experienced a revulsion of feeling, being discontented with his involvement in worldly activities after he had sought shelter at the feet of the celestial sage ; and he gave vent to his feelings, blaming himself in these words : ' Alas, I have done wrong in allowing myself to be plunged by my senses into this blind well of evil pleasures wrought by ignorance. Let me have done with them once for all. Fie on me, the pet monkey of this woman ! ' Dividing the earth among his obedient sons equally, and leaving behind him, as the soul does the dead body, the queen with whom he had savoured all delights as well as the opulence of empire, he, whose heart was filled with disgust for the things of the world, and who was armed with the strength that comes from meditating on the pastimes of Hari, dedicated himself again to the course of discipline charted by the celestial sage Nārada, thanks to the discriminating wisdom granted him by the grace of the Supreme Lord. And these are the verses celebrating him, which were sung in the far past. ' Who, other than the Almighty Lord Himself, could do what Priyavrata did in creating the seven seas by the ruts made by his wheel-rims, and dispelling the darkness of night ? He established the landscape of the earth by the creation of the island-continents, and set the boundaries between different parts of each of them with rivers, mountains and forests, so that men could live in them happily and without contention. He, who loved those that were devoted to the Supreme Lord, regarded as no better than hell the joys to be had in heaven or those that may be obtained in the nether regions or in the world of men by the performance of rites, or the power of yoga ' (36-41).

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CHAPTER II

AGNĪDHRA AND THE NYMPH

Śrī Śuka said : When his father had thus started on his spiritual quest, Agnīdhra, faithful to his injunctions, protected, with due regard to Dharma, the inhabitants of Jambūdvīpa as if they were his own sons. Being desirous of progeny, he once went to practise austerities in the valley of the mountain (Mandara); which is the playground of the spouses of the great gods, and having collected all requisite materials, worshipped with single-minded devotion the god (Brahmā) who is the Lord of the Creators, with a view to propitiating him. Knowing what he had in mind, the great Lord, the First Existent, sent down Poorvachitti, the Apsaras, who was singing in His assembly. She strolled in the delightful woods adjacent to his hermitage, with their wealth of lotus in pools of crystal water resounding with the multifarious cries of the water-fowl, *kārandavas* and swans, roused from their slumber by the musical calls of the pairing land-birds perched on the golden creepers that seemed to be hugged by boughs of trees of various kinds growing densely there. Hearing the pleasing tinkle of her anklets as she moved softly with steps that fascinated the beholder, the prince, whose eyes like lotus buds were closed in *samādhi*, slightly opened them and saw her. She was inhaling the fragrance of the flowers not far from him, like the black bee, and seemed intent on opening a way into the minds of men for the entrance of the god of love, with the beauty of gait, the sportiveness, the bashful and modest glances, the sweet words, and the lovely limbs which brought delight to the eyes and minds of gods and men. When she quickened her pace, her breasts, braid and girdle enchantingly quivering, as the bees hovered round her mouth, intoxicated with the fragrance that accompanied the words, sweet as nectar and heady as wine, that escaped from her lips, he succumbed to the god of love, who found his opportunity when he (the prince) looked at her ; and he spoke to her like one who was out of his wits (1-6).

'Who are you, and what do you wish to do on this mountain? Surely you are, O best of sages, some illusion created by the Supreme Deity, the exalted Lord! Do you carry those two stringless bows¹ for your own safety, friend, or are you out after the unheeding deer in the forest? We do not know against whom you, O blessed one, will, as you roam in the forest, aim those two arrows,² which are feathered with eyes like lotus petals, and full of languorous charm, and beautiful though without shafts, but have arrow-heads that are extremely sharp; may your present expedition be to the advantage of us, stupid folk! These pupils³ of yours, blessed one, recite all around you and unintermit- tently sing the *sāmans* along with their secret teaching in praise of the Lord. And all of them eagerly receive the stream of flowers that falls down on all sides from your hair, as the bands of *rishis* do the different branches of the Vedas. We hear only the loud notes of the partridges which remain unseen in the cages⁴ on your feet. How did the sheen of the *kadamba* flower come to invest the rounded fullness of your beautiful hip, girdled by the flame of the fire-brand? And where is your tree-bark garment? What is it that you treasure in those two horns of yours, which you manage to carry, tenuous as your waist is, and from which I cannot take off my eyes? And whence comes this red slush⁵ on your horns, by means of which, O beautiful one, you have filled my her- mitage with such a pleasant smell? Show me, O best of friends, your place, where people have on their breasts such rare appendages, which ravish the minds of the like of us, and in their mouths such wonderful things as honeyed speech and charming wiles and the nectar that wells up from the lips. And what is the food, O comrade, on which you live, for from your chew comes the fragrance of oblations made in the fire? You are surely a digit of Vishnu; your ears are adorned with brilliant, unwinking *makara*-shaped ear-pendants. Your face is like a lake, with its two leaping fishes, and snow- white swans and swarms of bees hovering about it. The ball that your lotus hands toss, flying about in

¹ Eyebrows. ² Sidelong glances. ³ The bees. ⁴ The anklet-bells.
⁵ The saffron on the breasts.

all directions, distracts my eyes, even as my heart is in a wild flutter. Are you oblivious of your mass of curls having come unbound, or of the mischievous, wanton wind having unloosed your girdle? By what austerities, O great anchorite, did you obtain this beauty of form which is calculated to ruin the austerities of those who are intent on them? You should practise penance with me, my friend; or perhaps this is the way the great god, who furthers creation, means to bestow his grace on me. I shall not give you up, the beloved one given me by the God of the Brahmanas (Brahmā); my mind and my eyes have got stuck on you and will not come apart. Take me, your devoted follower, wherever your fancy leads you, O you of the lovely breasts; and let your companions favour me and follow me' (7-16).

Thus that man of godlike intelligence, who was expert in the arts of persuasion that prevail with women, propitiated the celestial nymph and made her amenable to his will, using the sophisticated speech of those who pursue pleasure. And she, charmed by the intelligence, happy disposition, beauty, youth, magnificence and nobility of that leader of valiant warriors, enjoyed with the ruler of Jambūdvīpa the joys of earth and heaven for a hundred million years. And he, the first of Kings, Āgnīdhra, begot on her nine sons, Nābhi, Kimpurusha, Hārivarsha, Ilāvṛta, Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya, Kuru, Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla. Having given birth to these sons, one every year, Poorvachitti left them behind her in the house and went back to wait upon the blessed Lord, the Unborn. Thanks to the favour of their mother, the sons of Āgnīdhra were endowed by birth with sturdy limbs and great strength; and they ruled the different parts of Jambūdvīpa, known by their names, which their father had divided among them. The King Āgnīdhra, his sensuality still unabated, hankered in his heart after the celestial nymph, as one who was supremely to be desired; and he obtained, by the performance of the rites prescribed in this behalf in the Vedas, entry to her world, where the manes live joyously. On the death of their father, the nine brothers married the daughters of Meru known as Merudevi, Pratiṛūpā, Ugradamshtri, Latā, Ramyā, Syāmā, Nārī, Bhadrā and Devavīti (17-23).

CHAPTER III

NABHI PROPITIATES VISHNU

Sri Suka said : Nābhi, desiring issue, sacrificed with one-pointed devotion to the exalted Lord, the Lord of the sacrifice, along with his childless wife Merudevi. When he started on the sacrifice with a pure and devout heart, and the *Pravargya* rites were being done, the exalted Lord, Who is not easily won, even when worship is offered with the amplest measure of affluence, employing the best materials as well as the most suitable time and place, *mantras*, priests, fees and modes of procedure, presented Himself in person in a form exquisitely framed, because of His love for His devotees and His compelling desire to fulfil their wishes. It was a form which He had assumed of His own free will, and it charmed the heart of the beholder by the beauty of the limbs, which brought delight to the mind and the eye. When they saw Purushottama before them in all His brilliance, clad in yellow silks, four-armed, and distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark on His breast, wearing the garland of wild flowers and the Kausthubha jewel, carrying in His hands the conch, the lotus, the discus, the mace and other weapons, and adorned with crown and ear-pendants, girdle, necklace, armlets, bracelets, anklets and other ornaments set with sparkling gems, the priests, the members of the assembly and the sacrificer were overjoyed, like a pauper coming into great wealth ; with bowed heads they waited upon Him with *arghya* offerings, and sang His praises (1-3).

The priests said, 'Thou, O Lord That art supreme among those that are worthy of honour, shouldst accept at our hands, of Thy grace, the honour that we, Thy servants, would render Thee. We know, from the teaching of good men, only to say, "Salutations to Thee, and again salutations." What mortal born, whose mind is engrossed by the products of the *gunas* of Prakṛti, can presume to describe the essential nature of Thee, the Supreme Lord transcending Prakṛti and Puruṣa, in terms of the names, colours and forms known to this latter-day world? He can do no more than praise a few of those

great and auspicious traits of Thine that dispel the sins of all humanity. But, O Supreme Lord, Thou art graciously pleased with the loving worship of Thy devotees, singing Thy praises in a voice choked with emotion, even if they offer Thee only water, pure, tender leaves, the holy basil and blades of *dūrva* grass. If that were not so, it is inconceivable what satisfaction even this sacrifice, rich though it be in the materials and resources employed in it, can possibly bring Thee, Whose essential Self is that Bliss which comprehends the realization, spontaneous, incessant, direct and simultaneous, of all the supreme ends of life. This sacrifice was intended only to invoke Thy Grace, so that our desires may be fulfilled. But Thou, O Lord That art supreme over the highest Powers, moved by intense compassion for ignorant men who do not know what is their greatest good, hast shown Thyself to us, coming here—though we did not offer Thee (suitable) worship, and Thou dost not in truth desire it—like those who do desire worship, in order to confer on us that Glory which is uniquely Thine and is known as *moksha* (as well as granting us what we pray for). That Thou, O Lord, That art worthy of the highest adoration, and art foremost among the granters of boons, hast deigned to show Thyself to us, Thy devotees, in this sacrifice offered by the sage-king, is indeed the highest of boons. O Lord, the extolling of Thy virtues is the supreme way to happiness open to even the sages who, their hearts purified of all sins by the fire of knowledge blown to a blaze by non-attachment, have become one with Thee in disposition and find all delight in the Self; and they consequently never cease singing Thy praises. May it be given to us to utter Thy names, expressive of Thy glorious qualities, and possessed of the power to dispel all sins, even when we are unable to remember Thee—as might happen when we slip and fall down, or sneeze, or yawn, or find ourselves in some strait, or when we are down with fever or at the point of death (4-12).

‘ Besides, this sage-king, desiring progeny, worships Thee, the Bestower of all worldly blessings, as well as heaven and liberation, for offspring who shall be like Thee, since he looks upon offspring as the supreme

good—as though a pauper worshipped the Lord of Wealth, praying for chaff ! Where is the man in this world, who, if he has not devoted himself to the service of the saintly, remains proof against Thy invincible Māyā, whose ways are inscrutable ? For his intelligence is clouded by her, and his natural disposition overborne by the spate of poisonous sense-enjoyments. O God of gods, Doer of mighty deeds, be pleased in Thy equability and wisdom to overlook the affront that we have put upon Thee, in our ignorant presumption that progeny is all-important, by our stupid importunity in requesting Thy presence here' (13-15).

Srī Suka said : The exalted Lord, the First of the gods, praised thus in the words of the prose hymn, received the prostrations of those who were entitled to the prostrations of the emperor of Bhāratavarsha, and replied graciously. The Lord said, 'Ah ! it is an extraordinary boon indeed that you, O sages, whose words should not go in vain, have sought of Me, in asking that the King here should have a son who would be my peer. For I alone can be compared to Myself, since I am One and unique. Nevertheless what Brahmanas have said should not prove false, since the Brahmanas, the highest of the twice-born, are the mouth through which I speak. As I am unable to think of another who could be My equal, I shall myself be incarnate as the son of Āgnīdhra's son, with a fraction of Myself' (16-18).

Srī Suka went on : Having thus informed Merudevi's husband, as she was looking on, the exalted Lord vanished from view. And the Lord, propitiated by the great sages in that sacrifice, desired to fulfil Nābhi's wishes, and incarnated Himself as the son of Merudevi in the King's private apartments, O Vishnudatta, taking a body composed of pure *sattva*, with the intention of showing in practice the *dharma*s of the ascetics clad with the wind, who practise austerities and observe lifelong celibacy and achieve discriminating wisdom (19-20).

CHAPTER IV

THE RSHABHA INCARNATION

Sri Suka said : When they saw that at the very moment of birth he exhibited all the marks that distinguish the exalted Lord, and that with every day he gained more and more in splendour by virtue of his impartiality and unruffled serenity, his distaste for the life of pleasure, and the plenary authority and every kind of opulence that was innate in him, his ministers and subjects, as well as the Brahmanas and the gods, were eager that he should assume the sovereignty of the earth. His father gave him the name Rshabha ('he who excels all others') because of the matchless splendour of his body, which attracted the lofty panegyrics of poets, his energy, strength, beauty, renown, prowess and enterprise. Thus, when the Lord Indra, in jealous rivalry, withheld rains from his continent, the Lord Rshabha, master-yogi that he was, saw what had happen, and laughing, caused showers to fall on his realm, known as Ajanābha, by his own *yogic* powers (1-3).

Nābhi, having been blessed with the good son he had ardently desired, was supremely happy. With his mind entranced by Māyā, he fondly caressed, in a voice that was choked with emotion, the Primordial Lord, Who of His own free will had taken a human form, uttering such endearments as 'My child, my soul !' Finding that everyone, including the ministers, the citizens and the people of the countryside, loved his son, the King Nābhi anointed him as ruler for safeguarding the norms of Dharma, and placing him under the care of the Brahmanas, went to Viśālā with Merudevi. There he worshipped the Lord Vāsudeva, Who bore the names of Nara and Narayana, practising severe austerities, which caused no suffering to others, and engaging in meditation was in due course assimilated to His glorious essence. Of him (Nābhi) are sung these verses, O son of the Pāndus: 'Who could hope to emulate that achievement of the sage-King Nābhi, who secured Hari for his son by the performance of a pure rite ? Where is other man so devoted to the Brahmanas as Nābhi,

in whose sacrifice the Brahmanas, gratified by ample fees, showed him Hari Himself in His own proper person, by the power of their incantations ?' (4-7).

Then the Lord Rshabhadeva, looking upon his territory as singularly suitable for the performance of *karmas*, lived the life of a student in the household of the Guru, thus setting an example to the world ; and when his gurus, having received from him all that they desired, gave him permission, he entered on the householder's life, again to teach by example the *dharma*s pertaining to that stage. And scrupulously practising the rites enjoined by Śruti and Smṛti, he begot on Jayantī, the daughter of Indra, a hundred sons who were his equals in every way. Of them the eldest was Bharata, the great yogi, who was possessed of the most admirable qualities, and after whom this country is known as Bhārata-varsha. After him came his (Rshabha's) nine sons Kuśāvarta, Ilāvarta, Brahmāvarta, Malaya, Ketu, Bhadrāsena, Indrasprk, Vidarbha and Kikata ; these were senior to the other ninety. Then followed ten great devotees of the Lord, who demonstrated to the world the *dharma*s pertaining to those who followed the way of devotion ; these were Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Āvirhotra, Drumila, Chamasa and Karabhājana. We shall later describe their holy lives, enriched by the Glory of the Lord, and calculated to bring peace to the mind, and in that context tell of the conversation between Vasudeva and Nārada. The eighty-one younger sons of Jayantī, who dutifully obeyed their father's commandments and were of exemplary modesty, well-versed in the Vedas, and devoted to the offering of sacrifices, were purified by the practice of *karmas* and became Brahmanas (8-13).

The Lord, known in this incarnation as Rshabha, was himself free from the bondage of *karma* and a stranger to the miseries of the eternal flux, being none other than the exalted and supreme Lord, Whose essence is the experience of pure Bliss ; and yet he engaged in the practice of *karmas* as if he were subject to their sway, and taught by example those who were ignorant the *dharma*s that had decayed in course of time. Looking upon all with an equal eye, tranquil at heart, compass-

ionate, and eager to further the well-being of all creatures, he saw to it that men lived the householder's life in all its purity and pursued its objectives—Dharma, wealth, good repute, progeny and the enjoyment of legitimate pleasures, as well as liberation. The world follows where the great ones of the earth lead. Though he knew the secret teaching of the Vedas, which comprehended all Dharma, he took counsel with Brahmanas, and following their advice, ruled the people by employing conciliation and other policies. He worshipped the Lord by offering all the sacrifices a hundred times each, according to the rules, with the plenary advantage accruing from the most suitable time and place, and from his youthful vigour and the faith he brought to their performance, from the priests he employed, and the different deities for whose propitiation they were offered. In this continent, when it was protected by the Lord Rshabha, no man ever wanted from another anything whatsoever; nor did any so much as cast a glance at another's property; regarding it no more than if it were a chimera. The one exception was his loyal devotion to his King, which he wanted to grow and expand every day (14-18).

Once the Lord Rshabha, on his royal progress through his dominions, came to Brahmāvarta; and there, in an assembly at which the great Brahmarshis were present, he spoke as follows, in the hearing of his subjects, with the object of instructing his sons, though they were self-controlled and conducted themselves with respect and restraint in his presence by reason of their exceeding modesty and love for him (19).

CHAPTER V

RSHABHA'S TEACHING

Rshabha said: 'The human body deserves in this world something better than the pleasures that result in misery and that are available even to the creatures that feed on ordure. It should be devoted to the highest austerities, my boys, by which the mind is purified and enabled to bring one the endless bliss of Brahma. It

has been said that the service of the great is the gateway to liberation, while association with the men who run after women leads to hell. The great are those men who are equable in their attitude towards all, and have peace in their hearts, who are free from anger and friendly to all that lives, and whose conduct is in every way exemplary. Equally great are those who look upon their love for Me, the Lord, as the supreme end of life and who are not drawn to people whose talk is all of getting and spending, or to the domestic life with its absorption in wife and son and wealth, and who ask no more of life than the bare means of existence. When a man engages in activity from the desire to pamper the senses, he falls unwarily into sin. As this body, which though ephemeral is the cause of suffering, is itself the result of (past) sins, it is to my mind foolish and wrong to let oneself in for such sins again. So long as a man does not realize by proper inquiry the truth of the Self, he continues to mistake the body for the Self by ignorance. And as long as he engages in action, his mind is inclined to activity. And the proneness of the mind to activity is the cause of the *jīva*'s being saddled with a body and the consequent bondage of *samsāra*. When the light of the *Ātman* is hidden by nescience, the mind impels him to persist in activity. And so long as he does not come to have loving devotion to Me, Vāsudeva, he is not freed from the connection with the body. When a man, though capable of discrimination, is so careless of his own interest that he fails to see that the activities of the senses are unreal and not the promptings of his true Self, he forgets that Self, and becomes absorbed in the domestic life, where the pleasures of sex are the chief attraction; and the foolish man thus comes to know endless misery (1-7).

'The conjugal tie has been described as a double knot that binds the hearts of husband and wife each to the other. It is that which causes the delusion that makes men identify themselves with house, land, children, friends and goods in terms of 'me' and 'mine'. But when the mind, that (other and prior) knot of the heart, which had been firmly knotted by accumulated *karma*, gets loosened, he shakes himself free from this infatua-

tion for woman ; and then, destroying the root-cause of all evil (the ego), he is liberated, and attains the highest goal. He should work skilfully with resolution and untiring effort, guided by discrimination, to free himself from the ego that conditions the *jīva*. The means he should employ in this behalf are devotion to Me, the Immaculate Lord and Teacher of men, in a spirit of self-surrender ; renunciation of all desires ; patient submission to the pairs of opposites ; the vivid realization that suffering is the lot of creatures in all the worlds ; investigation of the truth of the Self ; the practice of austerities and the renunciation of works prompted by desire ; the dedication of all work to Me ; the evincing of constant eagerness to listen to the tales of My glory ; association with those who look upon Me as their God ; the extolling of My virtues ; the total renunciation of hostility to every creature ; the realization that joy and sorrow affect every living being alike ; the cultivation of tranquillity of mind, and the renunciation, my sons, of the egoistic attitude towards one's body and possessions ; repeated study of the *sāstraic* teaching regarding the soul ; preference for the solitary life ; effective control of the life-breath, the senses and the mind ; faith in the observances enjoined by the Śāstras ; the practice of continence ; vigilance in the discharge of ordained duties ; restraint in speech ; the acquisition of knowledge, culminating in personal experience, of My presence everywhere ; and the practice of *samādhi*. Using these means strictly in accordance with the teaching of the Guru, one should vigilantly strive to rid oneself of that subtle body in which are stored the residual impressions of *karma*, and which is itself the 'knot of the heart' produced by ignorance. And (when that has been accomplished) one should cease using the means too (8-14).

'The father, the teacher and the King, who desire to attain My world and regard it as the supreme end of life to win My Grace, should thus instruct, patiently and without showing anger, their sons, pupils and subjects, who are ignorant of the truth. They should not teach the way of works to those who are themselves predisposed, by their ignorance, to the performance of *karma* in the belief that that is the way to attain the supreme

good. For, what will he gain, who induces another to engage in the performance of *karmas*, which would be like making a blind man fall into a well? Men who, driven by inordinate desires, pursue all means of gratifying them, are blind to their own true interest; quarrelling with each other over trifles that promise pleasure, these deluded men do not know that they are letting themselves in for infinite misery. What sensible man who knows the danger will, instead of taking pity on him, wantonly encourage the ignorant fool to persist in his wrong course? It would be like encouraging a blind man, who has strayed from the right track, to go on. He (or she), who does not rescue from the grip of death (*samsāra*) the man to whom he stands in the relation of Guru, kinsman, father, mother, god or husband, is none of these things (15-18).

'This body of mine is such as to baffle the understanding. For pure *sattva* is My very heart, in which Dharma abides. Since I turned my back on unrighteousness and left it far behind Me, worthy men have called Me Rṣhabha. You, too, who have sprung from this heart of pure *sattva*, should serve Bharata, that very great man, your brother, with minds free from unworthy passions; doing that, you will be doing your duty by Me and discharging your responsibility for the care of the subjects (19-20).

'Trees and vines are far superior to other inanimate things. The world of moving creatures is superior to the non-moving. Animals endowed with intelligence are superior to the reptiles. Men are superior to other animals. Spirits such as the Pramathas are superior to men; the Gandharvas, the Siddhas and other semi-divine followers of the gods are, each class, successively higher than its predecessor. The gods are superior to the Asuras, and Indra is their chief; higher than he are the sons of Brahmā, Daksha and the rest, among whom the highest is Bhava. He is the son of Virinchī; and I am above Virinchī; and the Brahmanas are the object of worship to Me. I do not consider any other creature equal to the Brahmanas; how then can I think of any one as greater, O Brahmanas? I eat the food offered to the Brahmana with sincere faith, with a pleasure that I

do not have in the oblations made in the fire. It is the Brahmana, who has faithfully preserved the Vedas, that is my comely and external form, and in him are found *sattva*, the highest and purest of all the *guṇas*, the disciplines, internal and external, truthfulness, the desire to relieve the sufferings of others, austere living, patient endurance, and direct experience of the truth of the Self. When the Brahmanas who are devoted to Me and who look upon nothing as their own, want nothing even of Me, the Lord of infinite power, higher than the highest, in Whose gift are heaven and liberation alike, what can they possibly lack? You, my sons, should every moment contemplate with pure minds all creatures, stationary and moving, as My abodes, and honour them as such. That would be the most acceptable worship that you could offer Me. The employment of one's mind, speech, eyes and every other faculty finds its direct reward in My worship; for without worshipping Me, no man can hope to escape falling a victim to the great delusion, which is the noose of Death' (21-27).

Srī Suka said: The exalted Lord, supremely great, the well-wisher of all creatures, who was known as Rshabha, having thus instructed his sons, though they were themselves well-versed in their duties, with a view to setting an example to the world, wished to teach the great sages, who had attained tranquillity of mind and renounced all works, the mode of life characterized by devotion, knowledge and dispassion, of the Paramahansas. Anointing as King and protector of the realm the eldest of his hundred sons, Bharata, the great devotee of the Lord, who was equally devoted to His folk, he discarded, even while at home, every possession except his own body; and mentally absorbing the domestic fires in himself, departed from Brahmāvarta, a madman to all appearance, sky-clad, and with dishevelled hair. Looking like one of the world's rejected, he moved among the people behaving like an imbecile, blind man, deaf-mute, madman or goblin, and he would not speak though spoken to, having taken the vow of silence. He wandered over the earth all alone, regardless of the flouts and jeers of the scum of the earth, in the towns, villages, mining areas, agricultural homesteads,

flower-gardens, mountain villages, army camps, cow-colonies, cowherd settlements, caravans, hills, forests and hermitages. Harassed by their threats and blows, by their pissing and spitting, pelting stones, and throwing faeces and dirt and breaking wind at him, and by their foul abuse, he no more minded those insults than the wild tusker does the gnats. For his mind was not distracted by the notion of 'me' and 'mine' in regard to the phenomenal complex which appears as the body and which has no intrinsic reality; being securely established in the glory of his essential Self, having known by experience both the real and the unreal. Though the women of the City still succumbed to the shafts of the god of love at sight of the smile that played hide-and-seek on his face, he, whose exquisite figure showed the harmonious disposition of the limbs—the delicately moulded hands, feet and breast, the long arms and sturdy shoulders and lovely throat, the face with its beautiful and natural smile, and the long, violet eyes like the petals of the fresh-blown lotus, with their refreshingly cool pupils, the cheeks, ears, neck and nose shapely and well-proportioned—now looked like one who was possessed by an evil spirit, as he wandered with his mass of unkempt, matted curls of bronzed hair falling down his face, and his neglected body covered with dirt (28-31).

When the blessed Lord saw that men were opposed to the practice of yoga, he, holding that it would be reprehensible to indulge in retaliation, resolved to live like the python, and he ate, drank, chewed and passed stools and urine, lying down; and as he rolled in the excreta different parts of his body were covered with it. The wind that carried the fragrance of his excrement filled the regions round about with a delightful scent for ten *yojanas*. In like manner, adopting the ways of the cow, the deer, the crow, and other such creatures, he did as they did in eating and pissing too. While thus demonstrating the different modes of life adopted by yogis, the exalted Lord Rāhahna, Bestower of liberation, to whom the experience of supreme felicity was native, and in whom all human satisfactions were perpetually realized because for him the identity between himself and Vāsudeva, the Soul of the universe and his own soul,

was not obscured by the interposition of the body, found little pleasure in the *yogic* powers, such as flying in the air, travelling with the swiftness of thought, making oneself invisible, entering another's body, and seeing objects that were far beyond human ken, which came to him unsought, O King (32-35).

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF RSHABHA

The King said : ' Surely, O blessed one, the supernatural powers that accrue by the way to those who delight in the Self and in whom the seeds of *karma* have been burnt up by knowledge intensified by yoga, cannot again be the cause of sorrow and suffering ' (1).

The sage answered : You are right, but some do not trust the fickle mind, even as deer do not trust the wily hunter. So it has been said, ' So long as the mind is unsteady, one should not cultivate friendship with anything, seeing that in the past the accumulated austerities of the great have been dissipated by over-confidence. The mind of the yogi, who has been lulled by it into false security, is constantly letting in lust and other enemies that accompany it, even as the harlot admits her husband's enemies into the house. What sensible man would imagine that he had subdued the mind, which is the cause of lust, anger, pride, covetousness, sorrow, delusion, fear and the like, as well as of the bondage caused by *karma* ? ' (2-5).

Thus, though he was an ornament of the world of those who rule and protect the worlds, he (Rshabha) managed to keep his godlike effulgence hidden by his strange, imbecile ways, behaving like a castaway in appearance, speech and action. And wishing, in the act of discarding the body, to demonstrate how the yogi should depart this life, he ceased from all activity, having given up egoistic attachment to the body as the result of the steady illumination that revealed the identity of his soul with the Paramātmā by removing the veil of difference cast over it by the illusory body. But though the Lord Rshabha had abjured all attachment to the body,

that body, impelled by the ghost of self-love, a lingering remnant of the work of his own Yoga-Maya, wandered over the earth and came by chance into the Konka, Venkata, Kutaka and South Karnāṭaka regions, and was seen going about in the woods on the foothills of the Kutaka mountain like a madman, naked, with dishevelled hair, and with pebbles in his mouth. A fierce conflagration caused by the rubbing of bamboos against each other, shaken by high winds, enveloped the forest and consumed it along with the body of Rṣhabha (6-8).

Hearing of his doings, a stupid ruler of the Konka, Venkata and Kutaka regions, named Arhan, will imitate his practice in the Kali age, when unrighteousness flourishes. Deluded by destiny, he will turn his back on his own proper Dharma, by following which one may be free from fear, and will propagate, on the strength of his own untutored impulses, a perverse and heretical faith fraught with evil consequences. Under its influence, worthless men of the age, deluded by the Māyā of the Lord, will abandon the purificatory rites and the code of conduct enjoined by their own faith, and wilfully adopt perverse practices and violations of the rules of purity, such as the giving up of bath and *āchamana*, and the plucking out of the hair on the head; thus being guilty of contempt towards the gods. They will practically all of them become libellers of the Vedas and the Brahmanas, of the sacrifice and the Lord of the Sacrifice and of good men, since their intelligence will be confounded by Kali with its exceeding unrighteousness. Assured, like blind followers of the blind, of the rightness of their voluntary adherence to this latter-day gospel, they will plunge into the darkest of hells by their own action (9-11).

This incarnation was for teaching the way of liberation to men who are dominated by passion (*rajas*). The following verses are sung to bring out the truth. 'Ah! how vastly superior in merit is this Bhāratavarsha to the other island-continents and to the other divisions (of this continent) of the earth with its seven seas, since its inhabitants sing the praises of Murāri's auspicious deeds done in His incarnations! And how brightly shines the fame of the line of Priyavrata, born in which

the eternal Lord, the Inner Controller and Primal Cause of the worlds, practised the Dharma that brings liberation! Where is another yogi who can even dream of so much as going in the direction taken by Him, Who had freed himself from *samsāra*, seeing how eager they all are to gain—and make every effort in this behalf too—those supernatural *yogic* powers which he spurned as illusory?" (12-15).

And now I have narrated the sanctifying tale of the exalted Lord Rshabha, the supreme Protector of the Vedas and the worlds, of the gods, the Brahmanas and the cows; it has the power completely to destroy the sins of men and confer all that is auspicious and good. He who listens, and he who enables another to listen to this story constantly with devoutness and close attention, both develop exclusive devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. Incessantly drenching their souls, distraught by the manifold sufferings of *samsāra*, in such devotion, and finding supreme happiness in it, men of wisdom do not show themselves eager to accept even instant liberation, though it is the supreme good, and though it should come to them unsought, because they have gained all that life has to offer by holding themselves as the chattel of the exalted Lord. The Lord Mukunda, O King, was no doubt the Protector and Guide of you, the Pāndavas, and of the Yadus. He was the God of your allegiance, the bosom Friend and Adviser and Controller of your houses; He even acted as your servant on occasions. (All that is true.) But, while once in a while He grants liberation to those who worship Him, He rarely grants the bliss of devotion (16-18).

Salutations to the exalted Lord Rshabha, who was free from all desire, having realized the Self in its essence as a matter of constant experience, and who, in his infinite compassion, taught the truth regarding the Self, which frees one from fear, to the world of men whose minds had become oblivious of the highest good in their absorption with the world of illusions (19).

CHAPTER VII

BHARATA'S ECSTATIC DEVOTION

Śrī Suka said: Bharata, the great devotee of the Lord, married Panchajanī, the daughter of Viśvarūpa, intent on obeying the wishes of the Lord, Who had decided that he should rule the earth. On her he begot five sons, who were in every way worthy of him, even as the ego produces the five subtle elements. They were named Sumati, Rāshtrabhrt, Sudarśana, Āvaraṇa, and Dhūmraketu. It is from his time that this division of the earth, previously called Ajanābha, has been known as Bhārata. The King, who had all learning at his command, and was faithful to his own Dharma, protected his subjects with all affection, as his father and grandfather had done before him, while his subjects adhered to their own duties. And he worshipped the exalted Lord, Who assumes the form of the sacrifice of both kinds—with and without the sacrificial post—by performing at the proper time, with implicit faith, the rites, major and minor, for which he had acquired the competence, such as *agnihotra*, *darśa-poornamāsa*, *chāturmāsya* and *paśu-soma*, both in their primary forms and in their extended applications, according to the prescribed mode employing four priests. When, after due completion of the ancillary rites, the sacrifices were proceeding, the sacrificer would meditate on the *apūrva* (the 'transcendental effect')—the fruit of the rite, which is known as Dharma—as an accession to the Para-Brahma, the Lord of the Sacrifice, the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the God of gods, Who is the real Agent¹, because He is the Inner Ruler of all the gods denoted by the invocatory *mantras*. When the *adhvaryus* took in their hands the oblations to be offered in the fire, he, his heart purified of all passions by this rare insight, meditated upon the gods who partook of the oblations as being identical with the different limbs of the Deity.

¹ Among the Mīmāṃsakas there are two schools—those who regard the *apūrva* as remaining with the sacrificer, and those who regard it as remaining with the god to whom the sacrifice is offered. Since the Supreme Lord is the inner Controller of both of them, Bharata contemplated on Him as the repository of the *apūrva*.

Cleansed of all impurities by the flawless *karma*, he came to entertain a devotion that grew by leaps and bounds towards the exalted Lord Vāsudeva when He appeared in all His glory within his heart, as He does in the hearts of all His devotees, like a picture engraved—taking the form of the Mahāpurusha (Narayana) adorned with the Śrīvatsa mark, the Kausthubha jewel, the garland of wild flowers, the sword, the conch and the mace, that form in which the Brahma manifests Itself in the Void of the heart (1-7).

Deciding at the end of ten million years that the *karmas* responsible for the life of activity he had led, had been exhausted, he divided among his sons, according to their shares, the ancestral wealth which he had enjoyed as of right, and left his home with all its imperial opulence and retired to the hermitage of Pulaha, where His love for His devotees constrains the exalted Lord Hari to be present to this day, taking the form that is most acceptable to them. The great river Chakranadi (Gandaki) sanctifies the hermit settlements all around because in its waters are found the sacred circular pebbles (*sālagrāmas*) with hollow cavities on top and bottom. Living all by himself in the woods around the Pulahāśrama, he worshipped the Lord with many kinds of flowers and blooms as well as with the holy basil and water, and made offerings of tubers, roots and fruits. His mind purged clean of all desires, he was supremely happy, having found tranquillity. His heart melting under the intensity of the love which possessed him and grew apace as the result of his incessant adoration, his hair standing on end in the joy that swept over him, his vision blurred by the tears of love that intolerable yearning for the Lord brought to his eyes, he was incapable of action. His mind submerged in the deep pool of his heart filled to the brim with the bliss of constant devotion, enriched by contemplation of the lotus-red feet of his Beloved, he forgot even the worship in which he was engaged (8-12).

Thus dedicating himself to the service of the Lord, he who, clad in deer-skin, shone with his bronzed and matted curls wet from bathing three times a day, honoured the exalted Lord of the golden lustre in the orb of the

rising sun, chanting the Rg-Veda *mantra* in praise of the sun, and praying, 'We take refuge in the glorious splendour of the sun-god, Which is his essential Self and beyond the reach of Prakṛti; Which dispenses the fruits of *karma*; Which creates this universe by a mere thought, enters into it, and protects, with Its power of intelligence, the *jīva* that has desires, and activates his intellect and other faculties' (13-14).

CHAPTER VIII

BHARATA AND THE ORPHANED FAWN

Srī Suka said : One day, having bathed and done the obligatory rites and other essential things, he had been sitting on the bank of the great stream, reciting the sacred syllable (Pṛaṇava) for three *muhūrtas*, when he saw a lone deer, driven by thirst, approach the water-front, O King. As she was drinking avidly, there was heard not far away the awful roar of a lion which makes all the world quail. On hearing that the deer, a naturally timid creature with frightened eyes, was terrified; in her dread of the lion, she leapt across the stream, her eyes swimming, her thirst unslaked. As she, who was big with young, jumped, the foetus in her womb was dislodged and slipped and fell into the water. Suffering from exhaustion caused by the premature delivery and by her frenzied leap and the fear that possessed her, the doe, which had strayed far away from her kind, collapsed and died in a mountain cave (1-6).

Moved to compassion, like a blood-relation, for the orphaned fawn, forlorn and helpless, as it was being swept away by the swirling waters, the royal sage Bharata rescued it and took it home to his hermitage. With the intensely possessive attitude that he developed towards the fawn, attachment to it grew upon him day by day, as he fed and took care of it, petted and indulged it; and his worship of the Lord and other devotional exercises, as well as the disciplines, internal and external, that he practised, fell in default one by one, till in a few days they had all been given up. 'Alas for the poor fawn, whom the swift revolution of time's wheel has

parted from his kin and kind and those who are near and dear to him, and put into my hands ! To him I am father and mother and brother, kinsman and fellow, for he knows no other. He has put his entire trust in me. Knowing what a sin it is to abandon to his fate one who has sought one's protection, I should, without the least annoyance, feed and protect him, show him tenderness and keep him pleased. That is surely the reason why men of noble and saintly disposition befriend the helpless, though they have given up all attachments, sacrificing even their paramount interests in such a cause' (7-10).

Doting upon him thus, he had the fawn in his mind always, whatever he might be doing at the moment—sitting, lying down, walking about, standing or eating—and his heart was bound up with him by the strong ties of affection. When going to the woods to fetch *kuśa* grass, flowers, twigs for offering in the fire, leaves, fruits, roots or water, he took the fawn with him if he feared that wolves or wild dogs might get at him. When the fawn loitered by the wayside, ignorant like a child of the dangers, he, whose heart was weighed down by the heavy burden of love, would carry him on his shoulders in his timorous solicitude. And he found endless delight in dandling him on his lap and hugging him to his bosom. Even while engaged in the performance of rites, he would get up in the middle every now and then to make sure that he was there ; and then, his mind set at rest, he would call blessings on him, saying, ' May you meet with nothing but good on every side, my child !' (11-14).

If he did not see him, he would be distraught like a miser who had lost his hoard. His heart in a turmoil with anxiety for the absent fawn, from the yearning love he bore him, he would make piteous lament in his despair. ' Alas, alas, what has become of the poor fawn, orphaned of his mother ? Will he ever come back to me, wicked and unlucky wretch that I am, ignoring my crafty and cruel fowler's heart, because of the faith he still has in me, judging me, as good men do, by his own self ? Shall I again see him browsing in safety the young grass in the woods on the outskirts of this hermitage, protected by the Lord ? Might he not fall a prey to a wolf or a dog, or

some other cruel creature that hunts in packs or by itself? That divinity (the sun), whose rising is for the good of all creatures, whose essence is the three Vedas, is setting, and yet the fawn that the mother left with me as a trust does not return. Woe is me, will that prince among fawns ever come back to unlucky me and bring me joy, dispelling the gloom of us, his own folk, with his many pretty ways and fawn's frolics, which it is always a delight to see? If, while playing with him, I close my eyes in mock-meditation, he will butt me in loving petulance with the tip of his horn, soft as a drop of water. Rebuked by me when he touches the *kūśa* grass on which I have placed offerings, he is terrified; and immediately giving up his playfulness, restrains himself and sits as still as a hermit's son (15-22).

'Ah! what austerities did this good earth practise, that she should be able to reveal, by the marks of the timid fawn's tiny and lovely hooves, so soft and sanctifying, the track of that which was my most cherished possession, and having lost which I feel distraught and miserable! And how lucky, too, for the earth that she should become so pure and auspicious (by the touch of those hooves) as to be fit to serve as the sacrificial ground for the twice-born, who desire heaven and liberation!¹ Perhaps the blessed moon, who loves the weak and the helpless, protects the fawn that has strayed from my hermitage, taking pity on him whose mother died of fright of the lord of the jungle.² Perhaps he (the moon) comforts me—engaged in the search for the fawn, my heart burning, bereaved of one who was as a son to me, even as the land lotus shrivels caught in a forest-fire—with his nectar-like beams, like so much water, cool and soothing, copiously welling from his mouth, because of his love for me, and allaying my distemper'³ (23-25).

His mind thus distracted by impossible day-dreams, the ascetic fell away from the practice of yoga, in which he was engaged, as well as from the worship of the Lord, by the force of his past *karma* which had begun

¹ The habitat of the black buck is the preferred venue of sacrifices.

² A whimsical reflection roused by seeing the 'deer' in the orb of the rising moon. ³ This has reference to the practice of magicians who cure patients by spitting upon them.

to act in the guise of the fawn. How else can one account for this attachment to the fawn, a creature of another species, on the part of one who had abandoned the sons of his own loins, whom it is not easy to give up, because he had regarded them as impediments in the way of liberation? While the royal sage Bharata, whose practice of yoga was thus interrupted, remained absorbed, all forgetful of his own Self, in feeding, protecting, amusing and fondling the fawn, death, whom there is no escaping and who comes with lightning speed, came to him like the snake to the rat's hole. Even then, his heart clung to the deer as he looked at him, who sat by his side grieving like a son; and leaving behind his body along with the deer, he was reborn as a deer, like any other ordinary mortal. But memory of his former life remained; it had not gone with the dead body (26-28).

Remembering even in that body, by virtue of his worship of the exalted Lord, the cause of his birth as a black buck, he was filled with remorse; and he said to himself, 'Alas for me, that I should have fallen away from the path of those who have won self-control. Having given up attachments and gone to live in the lonely and holy forest, I had resolutely stilled my mind by dwelling on the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Soul in all creatures, leaving no hour of the day to pass without listening to the tale of His glories or thinking upon them, singing His praises, offering Him worship and meditating on Him. And yet, fool that I was, I allowed my mind to wander the moment the fawn came into distant view.' Keeping his feeling of despondency to himself, he left the deer that bore him and the Kālanjara mountain, and returned to the village, marked by its *sāl* trees, where were the hermitages of Pulaha and Pulasthya, a place where the exalted Lord abides and where the sages who have turned away from the active life love to dwell. And there he lived all alone, subsisting on dry leaves, grass and vegetation, and looking forward to the time when the cause of his having been born as an animal would be exhausted, and when that day came, he discarded his animal body, wet with the water of the holy stream (in which he lay half submerged) (29-31).

CHAPTER IX

BHARATA'S LAST BIRTH

Sri Suka said : To a worthy Brahmana of the Angiras clan, who had disciplined himself in the control of the mind and the senses, and who practised austerity, studied the Vedas, dispensed hospitality, remained content with what he got by chance, was patient, humble, learned, unspiteful, and possessed of self-knowledge and the high satisfaction of having done his duty, were born nine sons, children of the same mother, who resembled him in their knowledge of the Vedas, in virtuous disposition, exemplary conduct, good looks and generosity ; and of his second wife were born twins, a boy and a girl. They say that the boy was none other than Bharata, the great devotee of the Lord and first of royal sages, who having discarded the animal body, was born as a Brahmana in what was to be his last birth. Cherishing in his heart, in this last birth, the lotus feet of the Lord, which destroy the bondage of *karma* of those who listen to, meditate on, and praise His glorious qualities, he was terribly afraid of imperilling his soul by association with the world, since he remembered, by the grace of the Lord, his many past lives. And therefore he conducted himself before the world like one who was insane or stupid or blind and deaf (1-3).

The Brahmana, moved by his attachment to his son, wished to do for him, as ordained, all sacraments concluding with the *samāvartana*. He invested him with the sacred thread, and taught him, though the latter received the instruction unwillingly, the rules regarding purity, *āchamana* and other such matters bearing upon the observance of obligatory rites ; holding that a father had an ineluctable duty to instruct his son in these matters. But he (Bharata) did these things incorrectly even in his father's presence. Wishing to teach him the Veda, he set him to learn, first, the three-syllabled Gāyatri *mantra*, prefaced by the Praṇava and the *vyāhrtis*. Though he spent a whole spring and summer repeating it, his father did not succeed in getting him to pronounce the *mantra* except in a

disjointed way. But, as his heart cleaved to the son whom he loved as his own soul, he in his obstinate resolve to do what he thought was his duty by him, instructed him, in the face of his indifference, in all the rules and rituals that concern the neophyte who opts for limited *brahmacharya*, such as observance of purity, learning the Veda with all due discipline, rendering service to the Guru, and tending the sacred fire. While his fond wishes remained unfulfilled, he who was oblivious of his own lasting good, being absorbed in the concerns of the domestic life, was snatched away by ever vigilant death (4-6).

Thereupon the second wife of the Brahmana, consigning her twins to the care of his other wife, went to the world of her husband, following him in death. When their father was dead, his brothers gave up all idea of instructing him, holding him a dunce; for they did not know his greatness, being well-versed only in the ritual teaching of the Vedas and not in the Science of the Self. When the vulgar herd, who live like brutes, jeeringly called him madman, idiot or deaf fellow, he answered in character. If he worked, it was by the will of others. He ate, without giving a thought to it, whatever food he might get, much or little, good or bad, whether it was given in return for impressed labour or as wages, whether he had begged it or got it by chance. He did not eat for pleasure; because he had realized the Self as that pure Consciousness, uncaused and self-luminous, Which is bliss, and because he was free from the error of identifying the soul with the body and transferring to it the joys and sorrows that are the lot of the body exposed to the pairs of opposites. In heat and cold, in wind and rain, he went about with his body, stout and sturdy, uncovered like a bull's; his *brāhmīc* lustre hidden, like the diamond's, by the dust with which he was covered, from sleeping on the bare ground and doing without rubbing or washing, and wearing nothing more than a rag round his loins. And he was derided by men who noticed his inky-black sacred thread as 'one of those worthless twice-borns', or as 'a nominal Brahmana' (7-10).

When he sought to earn his food by working for others, his own brothers employed him and put him to

work in the fields ; and he did that work too, but without noticing whether he was levelling the ground or making it uneven, whether he was digging too much or too little. But he ate with relish, as if it were ambrosia, whatever they gave him—broken rice, oil cake, chaff, mouldy pulses, or burnt rice sticking at the bottom of the cooking vessel. Once it so happened that a Śūdra bandit chieftain, wishing for a son, had arranged to offer a human victim in sacrifice to Bhadrakālī. His servants, going in pursuit of the intended victim, who had by luck contrived to escape, could not find him in the darkness of the night, it being the midnight hour. But they saw the son of the Brahmana of the Āngiras clan who, by the strange workings of fate, was set to watch the fields from an elevated perch and scare away deer, boar and other animals. Finding him flawless in every limb, they decided that he would answer their master's purpose very well. Their faces abloom with joy, they bound him with a rope and took him to the temple of Chandikā. They bathed him according to their practice, made him wear a new cloth, adorned him with jewels, unguents, wreath, *tilak* mark, and so on, and when he had eaten, brought and seated him before the image of Bhadrakālī, with offerings of incense, lights, flowers, puffed grain, tender leaves, sprouts and fruits, as was customary at a human sacrifice, and with loud singing and chanting of hymns to the accompaniment of *mṛdanga* and *paṇava*. And the priest of the bandit chieftain grasped the frightfully sharp sword which had been consecrated with the *mantra* of Bhadrakālī, to propitiate her with the intoxicating blood of the human victim. When the Goddess Bhadrakālī saw what an outrageous act of cruelty was about to be perpetrated by those Śūdras, who, ignorant and slaves of passion by nature, were puffed up with inordinate pride on account of their wealth, and holding in contempt the heroic Brahmana breed, in whom was a digit of the Lord, lived as their wayward fancy directed, and delighted in cruelty ; when she saw that it was murder they were up to, the murder—which not even self-defence would justify—of one who was not only the son of a great Brahmana sage, but was himself become one with the Brahma at heart and enter-

tained no enmity against anyone, but was the friend and well-wisher of all that lives—she in her own person instantly burst out of her image, her body scorched by the intolerable fire of the Brahmanical splendour. Her face frightful with the wild agitation of the curved teeth and the blood-red eyes and the eyebrows arched in a frown of implacable indignation and tempestuous rage, she sprang up from her place, letting off a titanic peel of mad laughter, as though resolved to destroy the world, and cut off with the same sword the heads of those cruel and wicked men and drank with her followers the hot blood that welled up from their throats. And, under the intoxication of that heady drink, she sang aloud and danced with them and played ball with those heads (11-18).

Thus, invariably, does the transgression of those who seek to harm the great by malevolent and unhallowed practices, recoil wholly upon them. Nor need one marvel, O Vishnudatta, that even imminent beheading should produce not the slightest flutter in the hearts of those supreme renouncers who have found sanctuary at the feet of the Lord where one is free from fear, and are devoted to His worship, having sundered that 'knot of the heart' which it is so difficult to sever—the false identification of the Self with the body and the rest; who are the well-wishers, nay, the soul in all that lives, and harbour no ill-will against any, and are protected by the Lord Himself directly with that great weapon, the discus, which is none other than unwinking time, or by the hands of this or that creature who works His will (19-20).

CHAPTER X

BHARATA AND THE KING RAHUGANA

Srī Suka said : Once, when Rahūgaṇa, the ruler of the Sindhu-Sauveera regions, was going on a journey, the captain of his palanquin-bearers, who was on the look out for men, happened to see the great Brahmana on the bank of the Ikshumatī. 'Here is a strapping young fellow, plump and well-filled; he can bear burdens

like any ox or ass': thus deciding, he impressed him and put him, along with others, who had been likewise drafted, to forced labour. And the exalted soul was subjected to the outrage of being made to bear the palanquin. As the great Brahmana would put one foot after another only after scanning the ground to the extent of an arrow's length, the palanquin-bearers could not keep in step with him. And Rahūgaṇa, finding that the palanquin was jerking and heaving, told the bearers, 'Look here, bearers, why do you jolt the palanquin? Carry it evenly.' Thus reprimanded by their lord and master, they feared he might deal out punishment, and they humbly submitted, 'We are not careless, O King. We bear the palanquin as well as we can, faithful to your instructions. But this man here, though put to the work only just now, does not walk fast; we are unable to keep in step with him' (1-4).

On hearing the plea of those poor men, the King Rahūgaṇa reflected that by the offence of one man others (though innocent) might be compromised through their association with him. He was piqued at the behaviour of him whose Brāhmic lustre was obscured like fire hidden under ashes. For, though he was devoted to the service of men of wisdom, his mind was clouded by *rajas*, and his nature got the better of him, as he addressed him: 'Alas, brother, you are fatigued to the point of exhaustion, I can see that. You have carried the palanquin over a long way, all by yourself and for such a long time too. And you are not plump—oh! not at all—nor hardy; and age has made you feeble. The case is far different with these others, your fellows.' Though he was thus derided with elaborate sarcasm, he who had become one with the Brahma went on silently bearing the palanquin, for he did not identify himself with that aggregate of limbs, the illusory body, which was to be his last, formed by nescience cut of the elements, the organs of sense and action, the accumulated sins and merits of past lives, and the mind. When he found the palanquin lurching again, Rahūgaṇa was incensed, and he stormed at him. 'What means this, fellow? Are you dead even while alive, to flout your master's orders thus, holding me in contempt? I shall cure you of your negli-

gence, as death corrects the world of men, and restore you to your wonted state.' When he thus raved in his conceit, because of his kingship and his pretensions to learning, and showed his disdain for all the devotees who are dear to the Lord, with the inflated pride of a nature dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*, the blessed one, the Brahmana who had realized the Brahma in himself, who was the soul and the true friend of all creatures and was wholly free from pride, answered with a faint smile the man who had little knowledge of the inscrutable ways of the master-yogi (5-8).

The Brahmana said: 'What you said, brave sir, is certainly true. It was not said in mockery, as it might have been if there were such things as a burden to be borne and a body to bear it, and that body were eternally and inseparably attached to me; or if such notions as a distance to be traversed or a destination to be reached had any reality in them. Wise men do not speak of the spirit as 'plump'. That is a word reserved for the physico-psychic complex. Stoutness, thinness, diseases, mental sufferings, hunger, thirst, fear, strife, desire and old age, sleep, pleasure, anger, egotistic pride and grief—all these afflict one who is born with the body (out of attachment to it); they do not touch me at all. As for being 'dead even while alive', we see that that is invariably true of all things that are subject to change, since they have a beginning and an end. If the relation of master and man were permanent, O you who are worthy of praise, the connection between the right of the one to command and the duty of the other to obey would be permanent too. I do not see the slightest justification, apart from the practice of the world, for such distinctions. That being so, who is the ruler and who is the ruled? Still, what shall I do for you, O King? Tell me: What can your punishment or correction do to me, O heroic one, since I am established in my true Self, though the world might think me mad, or drunk or an imbecile? And to try to correct one who was obstinately proud or incurably careless, would be like ploughing the sands.' Having thus answered him, using his own words, the great sage, who had shaken off the primal ignorance that confounds the body with the soul, and was established

in tranquillity, went on shouldering the King's vehicle, so as to exhaust by experience the fruits of *karma* that had begun to act (9-14).

That King of the Sindhu-Sauveeras, O scion of the Pāndus, was a man who was ripe for commencing the inquiry into the truth, by reason of his faith. And so, when he heard those words of the great Brahmana, which were in conformity with the teaching of many treatises bearing on the knowledge of the Self, and which were calculated to destroy the knot of the heart, he got off his palanquin in all haste, and discarding his pride in his kingship, cast himself at his feet and begged his pardon. He asked him, 'May I know who you are, that go about thus disguised? Which among the Brahmanas are you,—for you wear the sacred thread—or which of the naked mendicants? Whose son are you? Where do you come from? And what brings you here? If it is for our good, are you by any chance Sukla (the sage Kapila)? I do not dread the thunderbolt of the King of the gods, the trident of the Three-eyed, the rod of Yama, or the weapons of the gods who preside over fire, the sun, the moon and the winds, or of the Lord of Wealth, as I dread the consequences of insulting the Brahmanas. Therefore, tell me, blessed saint, who you are that go about the world without attachment, hiding behind an imbecile look the puissance of your enlightenment, and measureless in your glory? We cannot hope, by the utmost mental effort, to comprehend your profound words grounded in the experience of yoga, O saintly one. I was on my way to the master-yogi (Kapila), the supreme Guru of the sages who know the truth of the Self, and who is none other than Hari Himself incarnate with a fraction of His power of intrinsic knowledge, to learn from him where one may find a haven of refuge in the endless flux of *samsāra*. Are you perhaps that master-yogi himself, going about, hiding your identity from the eyes of men, to see for yourself the state of the world? How can the man who is submerged in the cares of the domestic life and lacks discriminating judgment, hope to know the ways of the lords of yoga? (15-20).

'I know from personal experience that fatigue resulting from work is a reality; and from this I inferred that

you, who bore a burden over a distance, must be tired too. The work-a-day world, supported by the evidence of the senses, must be accepted as real ; a non-existent pot will not carry water. When a cooking vessel is heated over the fire, the water (milk) in it gets heated, then the rice in it, the outer parts first and afterwards the core. In the same way, by reason of his connection with the body, the organs, the life-breath and the mind, the *jīva* experiences the travails of the transmigratory existence, by identifying himself with the attributes of his limiting adjunct (21-22).

‘The King is the corrector and protector of his subjects. And the labour of him who looks upon himself as the servant of the Lord is never wasted ; for, worshipping Achyuta by doing his duty, he rids himself of all sins. Keeping these things in mind, look upon me, O friend of the afflicted, with a kindly eye, so that I, who have been guilty of grave disrespect to the highest and best of men from the arrogant consciousness of my kingship, may be freed from the sin of slighting the saintly. Though you, the friend and well-wisher of all that is, are not in the least affected, because you look with an equal eye on all the world and are wholly without egoistic attachment to the body, anyone like me, who insults the great, is bound to perish swiftly, even if he were as powerful as the Wielder of the trident Himself’ (23-25).

CHAPTER XI

BHARATA ON MIND CONTROL

The Brahmana told him, ‘Though not learned, you mouth the language of controversy used by the learned. But, for all that, you cannot be accounted among those who are in the forefront of those who know. For men of discriminating wisdom do not regard the inquiry into the Self as admitting of the same kind of reasoning as everyday affairs. True knowledge, which goes with non-violence and non-attachment, is hardly to be discovered in the Vedic passages which dwell at length upon the benefits to be derived from the performance of sacrificial

rites by men who live the domestic life. Even the profoundest Vedantic affirmations do not suffice to bring home the truth to him who has not realized, by inference from his experience of the dream-life, that the joys to be had by the performance of *karmas* by the householder, are not worth striving for. As long as a man's mind is under the sway of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, it will go on producing unchecked both *dharma* and *adharma*, through the organs of sensation and action. The mind, the chief of the sixteen categories, carries the residual impressions of *karma*; attracted to the objects of enjoyment, it is at the mercy of the perpetual flux of *guṇas*, and changes constantly under the stress of one passion or other. It takes to itself bodies with diverse names and forms, and invests the *jīva* thus with such distinctions as high and low. Being itself the adjunct of the *jīva*, wrought by *Māyā*, and the cause of the *jīva*'s revolving in *samsāra*, it clings to the *jīva* and brings him at the appropriate time happiness, misery or that condition (stupor), which is neither the one nor the other, as the inescapable consequence of past *karma*. So long as the mind is active (as above described), the phenomenal world is manifested in the waking and dreaming states; and it is always cognized by the *jīva*. That is why the mind is spoken of as the cause alike of *samsāra*, which means attachment to the world of the senses, and liberation, which lies in freedom from such attachment. Thus, the mind that is attached to the objects of enjoyment makes for misery, while the same mind brings release when detached from them. Just as a lamp, consuming the wick and the ghee, burns with a smoky flame, while, without them, its light reverts to its primordial state; even so the mind addicted to *karma* from the desire for enjoyments, goes into various modes of activity, but makes for liberation when it is freed from such addiction (1-8).

The modes of activity of the mind are eleven in number, five in relation to the organs of action, five to the organs of perception, one to the ego. The objects of these mental activities are also eleven; these are the subtle elements, the different functions of the organs of action, and the body. Odours, colours, tangible objects,

flavours and sounds constitute the material world perceived by the senses. The acts of evacuation of the bowels, coition, movement, speech, and the work of the hands are performed by the organs of action. The body is the eleventh object, towards which the ego displays a possessive attitude. Some thinkers, would, however, distinguish the ego as a distinctive twelfth mental activity, and the body, here described as a 'bed', as the object of that activity, which the *jīva* identifies himself with (9-10).

These eleven modes of mental activity go on multiplying themselves into hundreds, thousands and millions, because of the infinite number of substances, their mutability, the inherited tendencies and manifold fruits of the past *karma* (*dharma* and *adharma*), of the individual, and time, which brings about change. These endless modifications of mental modes are not effected by their own volition, or as the result of mutual impact, but by the Kshetrajna (the Supreme Lord) (11-12).

The Kshetrajna, the Ātman, is the witness of these modes of the mind, the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*, and the work of *Māyā*, which does *karmas* that lead to *samsāra*. These mental modes, which stream constantly, are sometimes manifest (as in waking and dreaming) sometimes (as in sleep) not. The Kshetrajna (the Paramātmā) is omnipresent. He is the First Cause and Perfection itself. He is realized in immediate experience and is self-revealing. He is birthless and supreme over all Powers, including the highest. He dwells in the hearts of all creatures as the Inner Ruler. He is the possessor of all the six glorious attributes, and He is Vāsudeva, the Abode of all that is. By His power of *Māyā*, He is established in the *jīva* (as the Inner Ruler). Just as air, present in all things, stationary and moving, as the life-breath, controls them, even so does the Lord Vāsudeva, the Paramātmā, entering into the world as the Kshetrajna, control it. So long as a man does not realize, O King, the truth of the Self by freeing himself from *Māyā* (the delusive notions of 'me' and 'mine') by gaining enlightenment, abjuring all attachments and ridding himself of the six enemies, so long will he wander in the maze of

samsāra. He thus wanders because he does not realize that the mind, the limiting adjunct of the *Ātman*, is the source of the miseries of the transmigratory life with its endless round of grief, infatuation, disease, desire, covetousness and enmity, by inducing in him the attitude of possessiveness. Therefore you must be vigilant to slay with the weapon of devotion to the Guru, who is none other than Hari, this foe of no small power, who is born with the body and whom you have neglected all too long, and which, though only a creature of illusion, has waxed strong and robbed you of your soul' (13-17).

CHAPTER XII

BHARATA ELUCIDATES HIS MEANING

Rahūgaṇa said : ' I make my repeated salutations, O Prince of yogis, to you, who are the vehicle of the Supreme Lord, the Prime Cause, and who, being established in the essential bliss of the Self, hold the body in contempt and hide behind the exterior of a common Brāhmaṇa that constant intuition of the Self. Like palatable medicine to the man who suffers from fever, or ice-cold water to him who is scorched by the heat of summer, are your words welcome ; they are like nectar to one whose eyes have been blinded by the serpent bite of the ego that identifies the Self with this wretched body. I shall later put before you certain doubts that I have. But be pleased now to explain to me, who am all eagerness, the words of wisdom that have fallen from your lips ; they are difficult to grasp, because of the extreme abstruseness of the arguments bearing on the truth of the Self. What confuses me, O master-yogi, is your observation that objective facts, which stand the test of evidence and produce practical results, have only relative truth, and that they cannot help in the elucidation of the fundamental Reality' (1-4).

The Brahmana said : ' This product of the earth, O King, moving about on the earth from causes unknown, is known as a man identified as so and so. And it has, above the feet, ankles, shanks, knees, thighs, waist, chest, neck and shoulders, one above the other. On the shoul-

ders are borne the palanquin made of wood, in which is seated another product of the earth, which is distinguished only by a name, being called the King of the Sauveera region. Egoistically identifying yourself with it, and blinded by the stupid conceit that you are the King of the Sindhus, you show yourself pitiless in impressing these unfortunates, who are oppressed and miserable, for forced labour. So, when you boast that you are the protector of your people, your audacity will not show you in a good light in any assembly of men grown old in wisdom (5-7).

'We know that all things, stationary and moving, arise from the earth and merge in it again; show me if you can anything other than earth, which may be distinguished from it, except by name, or whose distinctive nature may be known from its practical utility. Following the same line of reasoning, you will see that that to which the term "earth" is applied, cannot be shown to exist apart from its components, the exceedingly fine atoms. And the atoms themselves are mental constructs, formed, in their ignorance, by men who wished to account for the existence of the particular thing known as earth by representing it as an assemblage of these atoms. You should realize that in the same way everything other than the *Ātman*, which is distinguished as short or long, as small or big, as cause or effect, as animate or inanimate, is the work of the beginningless *Māyā*, which takes different shapes and is known by different names such as substance, the nature of things, inherited tendencies, time and the fruits of past *karma*. What is real is the Supreme Knowledge (*Jñāna*), which is pure, integral, all-pervading, *Brahma* and *Ātman* (the Self) and immutable. It is signified by the term *Bhagavān*, and the seers call it *Vāsudeva*. This knowledge is not won, O *Rahūgaṇa*, by the practice of austerities, the performance of Vedic rites, the giving of alms, the discharge of the altruistic duties of the householder, the study of the *Veda*, the worship of water, fire or the sun, or by anything else other than service to the saintly. For, among the saintly, the praises of the illustrious Lord are always heard, to the exclusion of profane talk; listening to it constantly, the man

who longs for liberation develops the purest devotion to Vāsudeva (8-13).

‘I was, in a former life, a King of the name of Bharata. Having freed myself from the bondage of attachment to the worlds of pleasure, seen and heard, I was devoted to the worship of the Lord. But, by developing attachment to a deer, I ruined my hopes and was reborn as a deer. However, even in that animal body, O valiant one, I did not lose memory of the past, because of my worship of Krishna. Therefore, fearing association with other men, I remain aloof and wander about the world unknown. Severing the bonds forged by infatuation, with the sword of knowledge won by close association with those who have renounced all attachments, and recollecting the truth by speaking and listening to the praises of His glorious exploits, one may attain Hari, thus reaching the end of the long road of *samsāra*’ (14-16).

CHAPTER XIII

THE WORLD A CARAVAN

The Brahmana went on : ‘With its feet set on the interminable way of the worldly life by Māyā, the multitude of *jīvas* intent on happiness and bent upon pursuits dictated by *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*, wanders, lost in the wilderness of *samsāra*, like the caravan of traders that has set out in search of gain, and it never knows peace. In this forest, the caravan, led by a worthless captain, is robbed of its wealth by six highwaymen, O King ; and jackals sneaking in snatch at the belongings of the careless trader, as wolves drag off the young ram. Plagued by stinging gnats and mosquitoes in the impenetrable jungle of creepers, rank grass and vegetation, he yet gazes fascinated at the phantom city of the Gandharvas, of which he catches glimpses, and at the goblins with fiery mouths which outdistance him by their speed. With his mind intent on such things as shelter, water, wealth and goods, he goes from place to place in the wilderness, and when a whirlwind blots out the directions with a smoky pall, his dust-filled eyes cannot distinguish

them. His ears harrowed by the shrilling of unseen crickets, his mind racked by the screech of owls, he, famished with hunger, seeks shelter under accursed trees. Sometimes he runs after mirages; or he throws himself into streams that have run dry; or, having no food, he duns his companions. Scorched by the heat of a forest fire on which he happens, he falls into despair. Or he is attacked by Yakshas and left on the ground for dead. Or, despoiled of his wealth by men of greater mettle, his spirits droop; he grieves for his loss, and dwelling on it, is so distracted that he falls into a swoon. Withal, he enters the dream city of the Gandharvas now and then, and rejoices for a brief hour, as though he had attained the summit of human happiness. Sometimes, wishing to climb up a mountain, he finds he cannot walk, since his feet are full of thorns and are pricked by sharp flints, and he is unhappy. Galled by the hunger that devours him with every step he takes, he, the head of a family, falls foul of his people (1-8).

‘ Sometimes, the traveller is caught in the toils of a python and left for dead in the forest, and he knows nothing of what happens to him. Or, bitten by poisonous vipers, he is blinded and falls into a blind well dark as hell. Sometimes he goes seeking such trivial things as honey, and is set upon by the bees and is sharply stung, and ignominiously put to rout. If he does manage with great difficulty to get his reward, he is robbed of it by others. And these again are similarly despoiled by others. Sometimes he is unable to protect himself against cold or heat, wind or rain. Bargaining over trifles, he quarrels with others from the desire to cheat. Sometimes, when he has lost his all, even his bedding, rugs, house and mounts, and cannot get what he wants by begging, he casts covetous glances at others’ goods and meets with disgrace. While enmity grows as the result of these attempts to aggrandise themselves at each other’s expense, they marry and give in marriage among themselves. Loitering thus on this grievous way, and undergoing every kind of difficulty, including loss of wealth, and bitter animosities, many of the travellers die or are as good as dead. Abandoning these where they fall, and taking with them the children born on

the way, others in the caravan press on ; not one of them goes back to the place he started from, nor has any one among them reached the destination up-to-date. Men of courage, who have vanquished the elephants that support the cardinals, become implacable enemies of each other, contending for the earth, each claiming, ' It is mine '. They lie slain on the battle-field ; not for them that Goal which the renouncer, who has abjured all enmity, attains (9-15).

' Sometimes the wayfarer lingers, twining his arms round the soft tendrils of the forest creeper, loving to hear the indistinct chirpings of the young birds that light on them ; sometimes, terrified by a pride of lions, he makes friends with cranes, kites and vultures. Cheated of his hopes of them, he would enter the company of the swans, but being put off by their lofty disposition, allies himself with the monkeys. Finding supreme happiness in debauch, the characteristic pastime of the ape, he forgets in the ecstasy of looking at the face of the beloved that a term is set to one's life. Delighting in his tree habitat, his heart doting on wife and children, pitiable in his insatiable love of sex, he is totally helpless to release himself from his bondage. Sometimes, falling by his carelessness into some mountain cave, he is in mortal dread of elephants, and remains clinging precariously to a creeper. Escaped from that peril somehow, he rejoins the caravan, O subduer of the foe. Started on the endless way again by the Māyā that knows no beginning, the mortal wanders interminably, not knowing to this day what is his supreme good. You too, O Rahūgaṇa, are in the same plight. Lay aside the rod of chastisement, cultivate kindness and goodwill towards all creatures, keep your mind free from addiction to pleasure, and armed with the sword of knowledge sharpened by service to Hari, cross the wilderness of *samsāra* and reach the goal' (16-20).

The King exclaimed, ' Ah ! how infinitely superior is birth as a man to all other births ! What use are these latter, or even residence in heaven ? For there one could never hope to meet in such large numbers holy saints like you, whose hearts have been purified by dwelling upon the glory of Hṛishīkeśa. It is hardly a matter

for surprise that the man whose sins have been destroyed by the dust of your lotus feet should develop the purest devotion to Adhokshaja, seeing that a brief hour's contact with you has uprooted my unintelligent presumption, firmly grounded in false logic. Salutations to those who have realized the Brahma, be they old men or babes, youths or boys at play. May the kings of the earth be the recipients of the blessings of the Brahmanas who roam the earth without revealing their greatness !' (21-23).

Srī Suka continued : Having thus instructed, O son of Uttarā, the Lord of the Sindhus in the truth of the Self, out of his abounding compassion, even though he had been rude to him, and received Rahūgaṇa's prostrations and his remorseful apology, the son of the Brahmana sage, who had intuited the Supreme, resumed his wanderings over the earth, his heart stilled like the ocean at the full, all the waves of the senses having died down. And the Lord of the Sauveeras, having absorbed the knowledge of the Self from that saint, discarded the notion that the body was the Self, which had been implanted in his mind by nescience. Such, O King, was the greatness of him who implicitly surrendered himself to the saint who put his faith in the exalted Lord (24-25).

The King (Parīkshit) said : 'What you, O great devotee of the Lord, whose knowledge is vast, said by way of indirect description of the transmigratory life, was framed in terms that might be plain to men of discriminating intelligence ; but they are not easy to understand for men whose minds are not instructed. Be pleased, therefore, to make the matter clear by explaining the metaphors used.' (26).

CHAPTER XIV

THE ALLEGORY EXPLAINED

He (Srī Suka) explained : The world of men is made to tread the dolorous way by Māyā, which is controlled by the Supreme Lord Vishnu, through the agency of the senses and the mind, which make men, who identify the body with the soul, experience the beginningless *sam-*

sāra wherein the *jīvas* are united with and separated from the many and various bodies produced by their *karmas*, good, bad and mixed, determined by the characteristics of the predominant *guṇas*, *sattva* and the rest. Like the caravan of traders that goes out in search of gain, the man who has to experience the fruits of *karma* done by his body, wanders in the wilderness of the transmigratory existence, which is as inauspicious as the cremation ground; and though his many enterprises there are frustrated by obstacles and rendered futile, he has not up to this moment turned to the path of *bhakti* taken by those who serve at the lotus feet of the Guru, who is none other than Hari. It is that path on which one finds relief from the pangs of suffering in the wilderness of the worldly life, where the six senses behave like robbers. The wealth which a man has earned with great difficulty may be put to its proper use in the service of Dharma; and that Dharma is the worship of the exalted Lord, which the wise speak of as what will stand a man in good stead in the next world. But he is robbed of it, as a careless member of a caravan, led by a worthless leader, is robbed of his goods, by the ravening desires of the senses and of the mind—to see, to touch, to hear, to taste, and to smell, and to will and strive—if he, having no control over his mind, and no judgment, plunges into the vulgar pleasures of the domestic life. Those who are nominally his family but behave like wolves and jackals walk away, as he looks on helplessly, with the wealth, which he guards as the shepherd does his lamb and is as reluctant to part with. As a field which, though ploughed every year, becomes overgrown with a tangle of weeds and rank grass before the next sowing if the seeds thereof have not been burnt up, so in the householder's life, which is the field of *karma*, *karmas* are never torn up by the roots, because the family life is the seed-basket of desires (1-4).

In that life vile men lay siege to his wealth, which is to him as the breath of his nostrils, as gnats and mosquitoes beset a helpless body; while locusts, birds, thieves and mice raid it. And yet, as he remains lost in the maze of *samsāra*, he looks upon the human body, which is as improbable and delusive as the phantom city of the

Gandharvas, as though it were substantial and made to last for ever ; because his mind, vitiated by ignorance, desire and activity, does not allow him to see clearly. Sometimes he runs after mirage-like pleasures in his craving for food, drink and sex. Sometimes, in the attempt to obtain gold, the excrement of fire, and the source of all evil, for which his mind longs, prompted by *rajas*, which is of the same hue, he pursues it like the man who, in his anxiety to get fire, runs after the will-o'-the-wisp, with a mouth flaming like the firebrand. And in his insatiable greed for accumulating the furniture of living—house, water, food, wealth and goods of every description—he runs all over this wilderness of a world (5-8).

Sometimes, mounted on her lap by woman, who is like the whirlwind, his mind engulfed by the overwhelming desire of the moment, his judgment clouded by passion, he violates the norms of *dharma*. With dust-filled eyes, he does not see that the gods of the different quarters are the witnesses of his trespass. Though he has known by experience the vanity of human wishes, he forgets his disillusionment in his love of the body, and once again sets in pursuit of those mirage-like pleasures. Sometimes his ears are split and his heart is harrowed by the intimidations and threats, direct and indirect, of the royal power or of the foe, which are as violently harsh as the swelling chorus of shrilling crickets and screeching owls (9-11).

When he has exhausted the fruits of good *karmas* done in past lives, he, who may himself die at any moment, seeks the help of those who are as good as dead and who resemble poisonous trees and creepers and poisoned wells in that their wealth is of no use either to themselves or to others in this world or the next. Sometimes, deceived by the wicked, in whose company he delights, he subscribes to heresies which can only mean misery both here and hereafter ; such as what the man who has fallen headlong into a (rocky) pit in a river bed suffers. When he is unable to get food by reason of others' hostility, he takes the life out of people by his importunity, be they his own father or son, or others who happen to have even so much as a blade

of grass that belonged to his father or son. Sometimes, finding himself in a home which is like the forest ablaze, and contains nothing that could give him joy, but where misery is heaped upon misery, he is consumed by grief and falls into despair. Sometimes, when the wealth which is his life, and exceedingly dear to him, is taken away from him by the King's authority, which his evil luck has turned against him and which behaves towards him like a demon, he is left dead to all appearance ; for he shows not the least interest in life (12-16).

Sometimes, taking for reality the day-dreams he has of meeting his dead father and his forbears, he derives the kind of pleasure that one knows in dreams. Sometimes he launches on the uphill task of elaborately doing all the *karmas* enjoined on the householder ; but in attempting to fulfil his ambitious aim, he meets with difficulties and disappointments that the world throws in his way, and suffers like the man who has to tread on thorn and prickly pebble on his way to the mountain he would climb. Sometimes, when his courage is sapped by the fire of hunger gnawing at the vitals, he falls foul of his own family and dependants. But when sleep, like a python, swallows him up, he lies engulfed in the utter darkness of unconsciousness, like a corpse abandoned in the deserted forest, and knows nothing (17-20).

Sometimes, when his evil pride is knocked out of him like teeth, by the stinging taunts of men, wicked as vipers, and he is denied even the peace that sleep brings, the grief in his heart dims his vision, and he falls into the blind well of stupor. Sometimes when, going in search of petty pleasures, he lays his hands on other men's women or wealth, he is slain by the King or by the lawful owners, and falls into the bottomless pit. That is why it has been stated that the man who lives the worldly life and engages in secular activity, or in the performance of *sāstraic karma*, sows the seeds for the endless perpetuation, here and hereafter, of the cycle of life and death. If by any chance he regains his freedom, Devadatta snatches from him the prize for which he had suffered ; and from him Vishnumitra grabs it ; and so it goes on, no one being sure of keeping it. Sometimes, unable to protect himself from cold and wind or other sufferings

caused by the gods, by the world, or by one's own body, he is careworn and dejected. Sometimes, bargaining with others over trifles, he makes paltry gains from his love of cheating and incurs their bitter enmity (21-26).

The worldly man in his passage through life undergoes many travails and tribulations—joy and sorrow, likes and dislikes, fear, pride, carelessness, mania, grief, delusion, greed, malice, envy, and ignominy, as well as hunger and thirst, mental and bodily ills, birth, old age and death, and so on. Sometimes, with the arms of woman, the Lord's witchery, twined about him, he forfeits his judgment. His heart is all afire at the idea of making a pleasure-house for his woman; and in that home of hers where, along with her, are to be found his sons and daughters, he is so delightedly absorbed in their talk, their animated looks and their winning ways, that he, who knows no self-control, precipitates himself into the darkest pit of hell, which does not readily yield its victims (27-28).

Sometimes he is terrified at the speed with which the swift revolution of the discus of the Supreme Lord Vishnu, in the shape of unwinking time, ranging from the atom to the two halves of the life of Brahmā, hustles to their appointed end, through the various stages of life, childhood, and so on, all creatures from Brahmā down to a clump of grass, who are helpless against it. But, instead of putting his trust in the exalted Lord of the Sacrifice, ever armed with His own weapon, the wheel of time, he gives his allegiance to the gods of the heretics, who are no better than herons, vultures, cranes or 'vatas', and are outside the pale of the Vedic faith. In doing this he relies on the scriptures concocted by the heretics and having no authority. Being grossly deceived by those who are themselves the dupes of their own fancies, he comes back to live among the Brahmanas. But he does not like the rule of life incumbent on the Brahmana, who must devote himself to the worship of the exalted Lord of the Sacrifice, qualifying himself for this by undergoing sacraments like the *upanayana* and performing the *karmas* enjoined by the Vedas and the Smrtis. And so he lives like a Sūdra who, because he cannot observe the *āchāras* prescribed by the Vedas,

being disqualified by his impurity, is interested solely in mating with a woman and rearing a family, much as the monkeys do. Living as he pleases, unrestrained by any scruples, absorbed in the vulgar pleasures of billing and cooing, he forgets death. Like the monkey on its tree, he revels in his home with its too earthy delights, doting on wife and children and giving himself over to the festival of sex (29-32).

Thus undergoing every kind of experience on that dolorous way, and dreading death, he is prostrated by illness and disease, like one, who, in trying to dodge an elephant, falls into a yawning mountain cavern. And he is afflicted besides by cold, the fury of the winds, and other miseries caused by the gods, the world and his own body, against which he is unable to protect himself, while his heart is gnawed by endless care. Sometimes, buying or selling, he gains a little wealth by resorting to cheating. When all his substance has been spent and he is left without such things as a bed, a seat and food, which are necessary for life and comfort, and he cannot get what he wants by asking, he resolves to obtain them by hook or by crook, with the result that he meets with disgrace and worse at the hands of those whom he tries to fleece. Though lasting enmity results from these continued attempts to grab each other's property, they contract marital alliances among themselves, because of past associations, and as often break them. Thus beset by every trial and trouble, the caravan of creation presses on, leaving to his fate whoever falls by the wayside dead or in dire extremity, and taking with it the new arrivals ; feeling grief, perplexity and fear as occasion arises, disputing with each other, now crying, now rejoicing and singing. But all except the saintly being held in bondage, none of them has up to this date turned towards Him Who sent forth mankind on its wanderings and Whom the Vedas point out as the Goal, and journey's end. For they do not learn and profit by the means (Jñāna and Bhakti) whereby they might reach Him, as do the contemplative seers who, having abjured violence and freed their minds from all attachments, have won tranquillity of spirit. Even the royal sages, who vanquished the elephants of the quar-

ters, and who were great sacrificers, quarrelled with each other over the earth, each claiming 'It is mine'; but they had to leave that earth behind them when they died and were stretched out on the battle-field. Released somehow from hell, the man who had fallen into it but clung to the vine of his past *karma*, climbs out only to join the caravan of this world again, and tread the transmigratory path. Precisely the same thing happens to him who had gone to heaven (33-41).

These are the verses that describe the achievements of Bharata. 'No other King can hope even in thought to walk in the footsteps of that mighty soul, the royal sage, Rshabha's son, any more than a fly can hope to emulate Garuda. He, in the prime of youth, discarded those things that are not easily given up, because they tug at the heart-strings—wife, children, friends, and kingdom—as another might throw away excrement; for his heart was wholly given up to the love of the illustrious Lord. That that King did not care for those things which one cannot bring oneself to renounce—the sovereignty of the earth, children, kin, wealth, wife—nor even for the Goddess of plenty, for Whose grace the greatest gods pray, but Who longed¹ for a glance from his gracious eye—that was only to be expected of one who was supremely great. For those whose heart cleaves to the worship of the Foe of Madhu look upon liberation itself as trivial. It was in the fitness of things that these things should have been discarded by him, who as he cast off the body of the deer, called aloud on the Lord, saying, "Salutations to the Lord Who is bodied forth as the sacrifice, Who awards the fruits of Dharma and Himself sets an example in the perfect practice thereof; to Him Who is the yoga of the eight limbs and the chief fruit of Jnāna; to Him Who is the Overlord of Prakṛti; to Hari-Narayana, the Inner Ruler and Controller of all that exists!" He who listens to or himself relates, or applauds the recitation of this story of the royal sage Bharata, whose pure virtues and exploits receive the plaudits of the devotees of the Lord, obtains

¹ S. says that 'Goddess of plenty' here should be taken as referring to the splendid retinue that waits upon a King and is a symbol of opulence.

all that he has a mind to, by his own puissance ; he wants nothing from another ' (42-46).

CHAPTER XV

OTHER DESCENDANTS OF PRIYAVRATA

Srī Suka said : Bharata's son, known as Sumati, who followed in the footsteps of Rshabha (by leading the *jīvan-mukta's* life), will be widely misrepresented by ignoble heretics in the Kali age as a God not proclaimed by the Vedas. He had a son by Vṛddhasenā, known as Devatājī. He had a son Devadyumna by Āsuri, and he had a son Parameshthi, born of Dhenumati ; and he, a son, Pratiha, born of Suvarchalā. Pratiha taught the Science of the Self to many, and his mind purified by this, he had intuitive knowledge of the Mighty Lord. Pratiha had three sons of Suvarchalā, Pratihartā and others, who were well versed in sacrificial procedures. Pratihartā had two sons, Aja and Bhūmā, of Stuti. Bhūmā begot Udgītha on Rshikulyā, and Udgītha had a son Prastāva of Devakulyā. Prastāva had a son Vibhu of Niyutsā. Vibhu begot Prthushena on Rati ; Prthushena had a son Nakta by Ākūti (1-6).

Nakta had, by Druti, a son Gaya, foremost among royal sages and a man of world-wide fame, who was the exalted Lord Vishnu incarnate with a digit of Himself, to succour the world, and who came to be recognized as an exalted soul by reason of his nobility of mind and other admirable qualities. His mind was constantly cleansed by the dedication to the exalted Lord, the Mahāpurusha,—Who is none other than the Brahma, in Whom are comprehended all that is, high or low—of the fruits of his own Dharma, that Dharma which leads one to the supreme goal and which he practised, on the one hand, by doing his kingly duty of protecting, nourishing, gratifying, rejoicing and instructing his subjects, and on the other, by offering sacrifices. His mind was, likewise, purified by devotion to the Lord, which was the reward of unintermittent service to those who had realized the Brahma. When the mind was thus purified and freed from the false identification of the

body with the Self, he intuited his own Self as the Brahma spontaneously manifested in the heart. And yet, without the least trace of egotism, he applied himself to the task of protecting the world. Those who have knowledge of former times sing this verse that proclaims his glory, O scion of the Pāndus. 'How can anyone, unless he were a partial incarnation of the Lord Himself, hope to equal Gaya by his exploits, even if he should be a great sacrificer, the recipient of the world's homage, a master of extensive learning, a champion of Dharma, the possessor of all affluence, the foremost in any assembly of wise men and the servant of the good? For Gaya was consecrated King with the waters of sacred streams by the chaste daughters of Daksha, whose blessings never go in vain. The earth, moved by his noble qualities, bestowed on his subjects all that they wanted, while he wanted nothing for himself, as the cow's udders begin to flow with milk at the sight of the calf. The Vedas showered their blessings on him, though he had no desires; the Kings, whose regard he won by his valour in battle, brought him tribute; and the Brahmanas and others whom he had propitiated by his just rule, surrendered to him in the other world a sixth share of their accumulated merits. In the sacrifice he offered, where such immense quantities of *soma* were poured as oblations that Maghavā got tipsy, the Lord, Who is Himself the sacrifice, personally received from him the fruit of the sacrifice, because it was offered with pure faith and unshakable devotion. The Inner Ruler of all beings, by propitiating Whom one propitiates all creatures, from Brahmā downwards—the gods, the inferior creation, men, herbs and vegetation—and Who is ever established in bliss, declared Himself well pleased with the sacrifice offered by Gaya' (6-13).

To Gaya were born of Gayanti three sons, Chitraratha, Surati and Avarodhana. And to Chitraratha was born Samrāt of Ūrṇā. Samrāt begot Marīchi on Utkalā, and Marīchi begot Bindumān on Bindumati. To him was born Madhu of Saraghā; Madhu had a son Vīravrata of Sumanas. To him were born Manthu and Pramanthu of Bhojā. Manthu had a son Bhauvana of Satyā. To him was born Tyashtā of Dūshaṇā. He had a son

Viraja of Virochanā. To Viraja were born, of Vishūchi, a hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Śatajit, and a daughter. This is the verse that speaks of Viraja's greatness. 'Viraja, the last of the line of Priyavrata, was as great an ornament of it by reason of his fame as Vishnu is of the gods' (14-16).

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHIEF DIVISIONS OF JAMBŪ-DVĪPA

The King said, 'You have described the terrestrial globe as extending up to the farthest point where the sun shines and the moon is seen along with the clusters of the luminaries. You just indicated, honoured sir, that within that area the seven seas were formed by the furrows cut by the wheels of Priyavarta's chariot, and these divided the earth into seven island continents. I would like to learn about all this in detail, namely, the extent and the characteristic features of the seas and the continents. The mind that dwells on the gross form of the exalted Lord, constituted of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, can easily be trained to the absorbed contemplation of the exalted Lord known as Vāsudeva, the Transcendent Brahma, Who is unconditioned by the *guṇas*, Who is subtler than the subtlest, and self-luminous. Therefore, O Guru, be pleased to tell me all about it' (1-3).

The sage replied: No man could hope, great King, even if he were granted the length of life of the gods, to comprehend or describe in its entirety the magnificence of the world, manifested by the *guṇas* of the Lord's Māyā. Therefore I shall only describe the chief features of the divisions of the earth, mentioning their name, position, extent and distinguishing marks. This island (Dvīpa) Jambū, which forms the innermost of the sheaths of the earth-lotus, measures a hundred thousand *yojanas* in depth, being a perfect circle, like the lotus petal. It has nine divisions, each nine thousand *yojanas* in width, separated from each other by eight mountains which form natural boundaries. The central division is known as Ilāvṛtam. Right in the middle of it

stands the chief of the great mountain ranges, Meru, which is all gold, with a height equal to the length of the Dvīpa. It is like the pericarp of the world-lotus ; at the top it is thirty-two thousand *yojanas* in width, and at the bottom sixteen thousand *yojanas* ; it goes down into the earth to the same length. Three of the boundary mountains, known as Nīla, Sveta and Śṛṅgavān, are situated to the north of Ilāvṛtam, and constitute the boundaries of the Rāmyaka, Hiraṇmaya and Kuru divisions respectively ; they run east to west, terminating on the shore of the salt sea at either end. They are each two thousand *yojanas* in width, and their length progressively decreases by a little more than one-tenth. Likewise, to the south of Ilāvṛtam stand Nishadha, Hemakūta, and Himālaya which, like Nīla and the rest, run east to west ; they are ten thousand *yojanas* in height and are the boundaries of Harivarsha, Kimpurusha and Bhārata. To the east and west of Ilāvṛtam run the mountains Mālyavān, and Gandhamādāna, extending from the Nīla to the Nishadha mountain ; they are two thousand *yojanas* wide, and they mark the boundaries of Ketumāla on one side and Bhadrāsva on the other (4-10).

On the four sides of Meru are situated the four supporting mountains Mandara, Merumandāra, Supārśva and Kumuda, each ten thousand *yojanas* in width and height. On these four mountains grow four gigantic trees—a mango, a rose-apple, a *kadamba* and a banyan tree, looking like flags that those mountains fly—each of them one thousand one hundred *yojanas* tall, with branches that have an equal spread and a girth of a hundred *yojanas*. There are, likewise, four pools filled with milk, honey, sugarcane juice and fresh water, respectively ; by resorting to which the companies of the demigods become endowed with the eight supernatural *yogic* powers, O best of the Bharatas (without any further effort on their part). There are four celestial pleasure-gardens, Nandana, Chaitraratha, Vaibhrajaka and Sarvatobhadra, in which the great gods divert themselves in the company of a host of celestial nymphs, who are ornaments of their sex, while the bands of the demigods sing their praises. From the top of the celestial mango tree,

which is one thousand one hundred *yojanas* tall, and situated on the top of the Mandara mountain, fall down fruit as big as mountain crests and as sweet as nectar. As they fall down, and split open, their exceedingly sweet juice, fragrant in itself and made more fragrant by admixture of other juices, swells into a flood of rosy hue and forms a stream called Aruṇodā, which falls down the side of the Mandara mountain and waters Ilāvṛtam on the east. The breeze that has brushed the bodies of the women of the Punyajanas (Yakshas), the female attendants of Bhavānī, is laden with a fragrance which is due to their having drunk of that stream and which is diffused to a distance of ten *yojanas* all around. Likewise the river called Jambū-nadī, filled with the juice from the rose-apples, as huge in size as an elephant, and practically seedless, which fall down from a great height and split open, flows down the top of the ten thousand *yojana*-high Merumandāra mountain and waters Ilāvṛtam on the southern side. The earth on both banks of that river, by percolation of that juice, and the combined action of wind and sun on it, becomes the gold called Jāmbūnada, which adorns the celestial world; the gods and demigods and their women adorn themselves with diadems, rings, girdles and other ornaments made of it (11-21).

From the hollows in the trunk of the great *kadamba* tree that grows on the Supārśva mountain flow five streams of honey, five fathom thick, and falling from the top of Supārśva, scent Ilāvṛtam on the west with their fragrance. The wind that carries the breath exhaled by those who drink of these streams perfumes the air for a hundred *yojanas* all around. Likewise, from the branch of the banyan tree called Satavalśa (hundred-branched) that grows on the Kumuda mountain, flow down many streams yielding all that one may wish for, be it milk, curds, honey, ghee, jaggery and food, as well as raiment, bedding, seats and so on, and they serve Ilāvṛtam on the northern side. Those people who drink of these streams are never afflicted by wrinkles, grey hair, fatigue, sweat, foul smell, old age, illness, death, or the pangs of suffering brought by excessive cold or heat, or loss of complexion, or other misfortune, and they enjoy unsurpassed happiness all their lives (22-24).

Like the filaments round the pericarp of the lotus are the twenty foot-hills which surround Meru ; these are Kuranga, Kurara, Kusumbha, Vaikanka, Trikūta, Sīsira, Patanga, Ruchaka, Nishadha, Sinivāsa, Kapila, Sankha, Vaidūrya, Jārudhi, Hamsa, Rshabha, Nāga, Kālanjara, Nārada and Ādi (25-26).

To the east of Meru lie Jathara and Devakuta, 18,000 *yojanas* long from north to south and two thousand *yojanas* in width and height. Similarly to the west of Meru lie Pavana and Pāriyātra, and to the south Kailāsa and Karavīra, the latter two running from east to west ; and to the north of Meru lie Trisṅga and Makara. With the eight mountains disposed about it, the gold mountain shines like the fire surrounded by the sacred twigs. They speak of the golden city of the exalted Lord, the Self-created, as being located on the top of the Meru at the centre, built in the form of a square, covering ten million *yojanas*. All around it are located the eight capital cities of the Guardians of the world, each in its appropriate direction and in the colour of its deity (27-29).

CHAPTER XVII

THE DESCENT OF THE GANGĀ

Sri Suka said : When the exalted Lord Vishnu, appearing at the sacrifice (offered by Bali) lifted up His left foot to the skies, the shell of the cosmic egg was burst open on top by the nail of His big toe, and through the gap thus made flowed down in a stream the waters above the cosmos ; and with her waters reddened, in washing His lotus foot, by (the saffron on it, which was like) the pollen on the filaments of the lotus, that stream became capable of washing off the sins of all the world by her mere touch, and yet retain her own purity. Known at that stage by no other name except that of Bhagavatpadī, she, after a very long time, reckoned in terms of thousands of four-*yuga* cycles, descended on the summit of the heavens, which is called 'Vishnu-pada'. There, the son of Uttānapāda, that man of high resolve and supreme devotion to the Lord, bathes

in it thrice every day even now, with ardent faith. As he thinks, 'This is the water that flows from the lotus foot of the exalted Lord, the God of our fathers,' his heart is drenched by the devotion that swells every moment and overflows; and from his closed eyes, like buds, there glide purifying tear-drops as, overwhelmed by emotion, his body thrills, the hair bristling with pleasure. Thereafter the seven sages, knowing her greatness, receive her on their piled-up, matted locks, with all the adoring welcome with which the men who yearn for liberation would greet release when it comes. They, who neglected all other objects including enlightenment regarding the Self, for the incessant joy of giving their devotion to the exalted Lord, the All-Soul, Vāsudeva, look upon this as the supreme felicity won by their austerities. Descending thence along the skyey path of the gods, filled with the bustle and tumult of many thousand crores of aerial cars, she bathes the orb of the moon and falls down in the abode of Brahmā. Then, dividing into four streams called Sītā, Alakanandā, Chakshus and Bhadrā, she flows in four different directions and falls into the sea (1-5).

The Sītā, falling down from the abode of Brahmā, on to the principal peaks of the mountains that surround the Meru (as the filaments the pericarp), flows along and descends on the peaks of the Gandhamādana mountain, and running thence east through Bhadrāśva country, enters the salt sea. The Chakshus, falling down from the top of Mālyavān, flows west, with undiminished swiftness, through the Ketumāla country and joins the sea. The Bhadrā, falling down from Meru on its northern side on three mountains, one after the other, descends finally from the top of the Sṛṅgavān into the Uttarakuru country, and flowing north through it falls into the sea. Likewise, the Alakanandā, falling down from Brahmā's abode on the southern side, flows over many peaks, and reaching Hemakūta, dashes down, assaulting many a Himalayan peak with unabated swiftness, and passing through Bhāratavarsha in a southerly direction, enters the sea. It has been said that for the man who comes to bathe in her waters it is not difficult to gain, with every step he takes, the fruits promised for the

performance of *asvamedha*, *rājasūya* and so on. There are hundreds of other streams also, those that flow west and those that flow east, which take their rise from the Meru and other mountains, and pass through these countries (6-10).

But of all these countries, Bhārata has been singled out as the one that is suitable for the performance of *karma*; the other eight being the places on earth where those who have sojourned in heaven enjoy the remnants of the fruits of their merit and are described as paradises on earth. In these countries men live for ten thousand years; they are comparable to the gods, and have the strength of ten thousand elephants, with bodies of adamant hardness; they are happy in the possession of strength, youth, and unabated zest for pleasure. They have wives with whom they enjoy the supreme delights of sex, till one year of life is left, when their love-life finds its consummation in their women bearing them a single child. In these regions the happy conditions of life in the Tretā-yuga obtain perpetually. Here the great gods are entertained by the principal officers of their retinues with lavish display, the while they divert themselves, as the fancy moves them, with water-sports and other fascinating pastimes—their hearts and eyes ravished by the charming beauties of heaven, whose amorous inclination inspires their playful laughter and coy glances—in their woodland retreats and hermitages and mountain valleys, which are delightful with their trees whose branches and clinging vines are bowed down with the weight of the bunches of flowers, fruits and tender leaves of all seasons, and in their reservoirs of pellucid water with their fresh-blown lotus and other blooms, which resound with the notes of the swans, water-fowl, *kārandavas*, *sāras*-cranes, *chakravākas* and other birds, as well as the hum of many kinds of bees attracted by the fragrance of those flowers (11-13).

In all the nine countries of this continent, the exalted Lord Narayana, the Mahāpurusha, is Himself present in all His different manifestations even now, from the desire to bestow His grace on the inhabitants of those regions. But in Ilāvṛtam there is only one male, the exalted Lord Bhava; no other male enters it, who knows

the reason why Bhavānī uttered a curse to the effect that any man who did so would be turned into a woman. I shall tell you about it later. Here the Lord Bhava, attended and served by millions of young women who look upon Bhavānī as their mistress, worships the fourth form, controlling the work of *Tamas*, known as Sankar-shaṇa, of the exalted Lord, the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu), Who takes four forms. Establishing that form of the Lord, from which He Himself originated, in His heart, by contemplation, He recites the following *mantra*: 'Om: Salutations to the exalted Lord, the Mahāpurusha, Who makes manifest the objective world, the product of the *guṇas*, while He Himself remains unfathomable in His infinitude.' And He prays, 'I worship Thee, O Supreme Lord That art meet for adoration, and art the Haven of Refuge and the Home of all the attributes of Omnipotence; That hast shown Thyself as the true Lover of all creatures, in dealing with Thy devotees, by freeing them from the bondage of *samsāra*, while inflicting it on those who are lacking in devotion to Thee. Who that is keen on controlling His senses would not honour and adore Him Who, though He is the Witness of the objects of the senses and the Cause of the activities of the mind, as the Inner Ruler in all beings, is not in the least attached to them, unlike us who have not subdued the violence of our temper? Salutations to Him Who, by His own Māyā, appears to men of impure minds as tipsy and red-eyed, fuddled with drink; though the womenfolk of the Nāgas, engaged in offering Him worship, are so thrilled by the touch of His foot that, overcome by bashfulness, they dare not go on with it. Salutations to Him Whom the Vedas speak of as the Cause of the preservation, creation and destruction of the universe, but is Himself untouched by those vicissitudes, Who is infinite, and is not so much as aware of the orb of the earth, like a mustard seed, lost among His thousand heads (14-21).

'By the operation of the *guṇas*, there emerged, at the beginning of creation, His manifestation as the Mahat, predominantly constituted of *sattva*, and one with it; the exalted Lord, the Unborn (Brahmā), born of Whom I create, by means of the threefold ego, the gods,

the elements and the senses. All of us, the Mahat, the ego, the gods, the elements and the senses, are amenable to His control through His creative power (*kriyāśakti*) as birds are controlled by a string, and we create the universe by His Grace. Salutations to Him, the Lord in Whom all things begin and end, Whose Māyā is known only too well to all creatures on whom it fastens the knot of the heart in the shape of *karmas*, and who are deluded by the objective world produced by the *guṇas*, but who know no way by which this Māyā may be transcended' (22-24).

CHAPTER XVIII

OTHER COUNTRIES OF JAMBŪ-DVĪPA

Srī Suka said : In the Bhadrāśva country, Bhadrāśvas, a son of Dharma, the principal members of his family and his chief officials, having established in their minds, by the intensity of contemplation, the Hayagrīva form of the Lord, the embodiment of Dharma, to which He is specially partial, extol Him. They recite the following *mantra* : 'Om : Salutations to the exalted Lord Dharma, Who purges the heart' ; and they pray, 'Ah ! how wonderful the ways of the Lord, that men should not see death, though he is there right before their eyes. The man who has cremated his father and his son, himself wishes to live, his mind being busy with wicked designs for the sake of trivial pleasures. Men of learning speak of the world as evanescent. Those who have experience of *samādhi* see that it is really so. And yet they are all confounded by Thy Māyā, O Thou That knowest no birth. Marvellous beyond understanding are Thy ways. I make my submission to Thee. Though Thou art devoid of all activity, and Thy vision is unobstructed (by Māyā), the Veda agrees in attributing to Thee the acts of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe ; and this should be no cause for surprise. For this may be rightly affirmed of Thee, Thou being all that exists and the Cause of its coming into existence ; though it would not be true of Thee in Thy pristine state, since Thou art distinct and apart from it. I offer

my salutations to Thee of the indefeasible will, Who didst take the form of a man-horse and recover from Rasātala, at the request of Brahmā, the Vedas that had been stolen by ignorance (in the form of the Daitya Madhu) at the time of the world's dissolution' (1-6).

In Harivarsha the Lord is established in the form of the Man-lion. I shall later explain the reason for His taking that form. There Prahrāda, the great devotee of the Lord, in whom reside all the qualities of exalted souls, and who by his disposition and conduct purified and redeemed the Daitya and Dānava races, worships this beloved form of the Lord, along with the inhabitants of that country, with a sustained devotion which is exclusive and unclouded by any ulterior interest. And this is the *mantra* he recites: 'Om: Salutations to the exalted Lord Narasimha, salutations to the Light of lights. Manifest Thyself, do, O Thou That art possessed of adamantine claws and tusks, burn up the residual impressions of *karma*; swallow up the darkness in our hearts. Accept my prayer and abide in my heart, so that fear shall not show its head there: *Om Kshraum*.' And he prays, 'May all the world be happy and well. May the wicked cease from cruelty. May all creatures think and plan for nothing but each other's good. May all of us give our disinterested devotion to Adhokshaja. Let us not be involved in attachments. If attachment there must be, let it be, not to one's home, wife and children, wealth and kindred, but to those who love the Lord. The man who has controlled his senses and takes nothing more for himself than what just suffices to keep him alive, soon finds fulfilment; not the man who loves to pamper the senses. For, when a man drinks in with his ear the story of the exploits of Mukunda, which he hears in the company of devotees, and which have extraordinary power, the Lord Who knows no birth enters his heart and forthwith washes it clean of evil; whereas holy waters only cleanse those who resort to them frequently and then, too, only of the impurities and sins of the body. Who then would not give himself whole-heartedly to the service of the Lord's devotees? In him who is free from all desires and is devoted to the exalted Lord Hari, dwell all the gods, along with all

noble qualities. How can he, who is devoid of devotion to Hari and who is ever pursuing trivial pleasures, because his mind dwells longingly on them, come to possess the virtues of the great? The exalted Lord Hari is the very life of all creatures, as water is the native element of the fish that crave for it. The man who, however great he might be, remains passionately addicted to his house and family, will know no greatness except the (conventional) respect accorded to the husband by his wife or by the younger to the elders in a family. Therefore devote yourselves to the feet of Nṛsimha, where one is free from fear, renouncing the domestic life, which is the source of all hankering, infatuation, despondency, anger, pride, improper desire, wretchedness and mental suffering, and which thus keeps one revolving in *samsāra* endlessly' (7-14).

In the Ketumāla country, the exalted Lord is established as Kāmadeva (the god of love) to give pleasure to the Goddess Lakshmi and to the rulers of that country, the gods and goddesses who number (36000) as many as the days and nights that make up a hundred years (the full span of life) and who are the sons and daughters of Prajāpati, the deity who presides over the year. At the end of the year these goddesses, terrified by the power of the great weapon (discus) of the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu), give birth to children that are born dead. He delights His own senses and gives pleasure to Rāmā by the beauty of His gait and the loveliness of the lotus face, with the eyebrows lifted up by a happy smile and a laughing glance. With intense concentration, the Goddess Rāmā worships that form of the Lord assumed by Him of His own free will, along with the daughters of the Prajāpati in the nights and with his sons in daytime. She utters this *mantra* : 'Om Hrām, Hrīm, Hṛgm, Om. My reverence shall be always offered, here and hereafter, to Thee, our Lord and Spouse, O God of Love, Controller of all faculties, Abode of all rare and admirable qualities, Ruler of all actions, sensations and mentations and the objects thereof ; to Thee that art embodied in the sixteen entities, and art attained by the practice of the Vedic rites ; that art food and nectar as well as all else that exists ; that art the vigour of the mind, the

robustness of the faculties and the strength of the body ' (15-18).

And she extols Him thus : ' Women worship Thee that art Thyself the Controller of all the senses, by observing vows, from the desire to obtain a man for spouse. But these spouses, being themselves unfree, are unable to protect whatever the women love—their children, wealth, or their own life. He alone can be regarded as lord and master who, having nothing to fear from anybody anywhere, is able to save from every peril all who are stricken with fear. Thou alone art truly lord and master in this sense, for Thou prizest nothing more than the Bliss of the Self. All others go in fear of each other. That woman who desires to worship only the lotus feet of Thee that art so great, obtains all that the heart could wish. But if Thou art worshipped only with some desired end in view, Thou grantest only that ; and when that wish, having been fulfilled, gives no further satisfaction, she falls to grieving. From the desire for the gratification of the senses, the Unborn (Brahmā), Īśvara, the gods, the Asuras and others practise the most rigorous austerities, to win my favour. But no one other than those who put their trust wholly in Thy feet, knows the good fortune that my glance bestows, O Invincible Lord, since I am wholly devoted to Thee. Therefore, O Achyuta, vouchsafe me too the touch of Thy much-praised lotus hand, which Thou layest on the heads of Thy devotees. Thou that art supremely great, bearest me on Thy breast in the form of the mark (Śrīvatsa). But then, who can hope to understand the doings of the Supreme Lord, employing His Māyā ? ' (19-23).

In the Rāmyaka country, the (present)¹ Manu, to whom was revealed in the previous Manvantara, when he was King of that country, that form of the Lord incarnate as a fish which is so dear to him, worships Him (in that incarnation) to this day with intense devotion, uttering this *mantra* ; ' Om : Salutations to the exalted Lord, the Great Fish, the Inner Ruler (Sūtrātma), Who is predominantly *sāttvic*, and from Whom come

¹ See foot-note 1 on p. 9 *ante*.

mental vigour, robustness of the faculties and bodily strength.' And he praises Him thus : 'Thou art none other than the Supreme Lord Who controls all creatures through the duties, indicated by their names, which He has imposed upon them, as men control wooden puppets in the form of woman. Unseen by even the Guardians of the worlds, Thou movest at will in all creatures inside (as the life-breath) and outside (as air) filling the worlds with Thy loud voice (uttering Thy commandments). When those same Guardians of the worlds, eaten up with jealousy of Thee, tried their best, leaving Thee aside, to protect the bipeds and the quadrupeds, the moving and the non-moving, all things that are to be seen in fact, they found themselves powerless to do so, jointly or singly. But Thou didst save, O Lord that knowest no birth, the earth, the receptacle of all plant and vegetable life, as well as me, swiftly bearing us, by virtue of Thy energy, through the ocean of the world's deluge, wreathed with billows. Salutations to Thee, the (Sūtrātman) Controller of the life-breath of all beings' (24-28).

In the Hiraṇmaya country the Lord is established in the form of His tortoise incarnation. Aryamā, the leader of the hosts of the manes, worships that exceedingly beloved form of His along with the inhabitants of that country, reciting this *mantra* : 'Salutations to Thee, the exalted Lord in the form of the tortoise, characterized by plenary *sattva*, and dwelling in a place which none has seen. Salutations to Thee that art of immemorial age, and art everywhere, that art the support of all that is.' And he prays, 'Salutations to Thee, Whose appearance baffles description. The objective world, manifested by Thy Māyā, is Thine own form (as there is nought else); myriad-shaped, and impossible to reckon, being the product of illusion. All creatures, described variously as viviparous, or oviparous, as bred in sweat or propagated by seed, as stationary or moving, as gods, sages or manes, as elements, as the world of the senses, as heaven, earth or upper air, as mountains, rivers, oceans, islands, planets and fixed stars, are but Thee, the only Existent. While Thou bearest an infinite number of names, forms and shapes

with their specific characteristics, learned men have sought to resolve this multiplicity by positing a certain number of categories. But when knowledge of the truth dawns on the mind, it shows up the untenability of these assumptions. Salutations to Thee That art that Truth which is also the ultimate teaching of the Sāṅkhya' (29-33).

In the Uttara-kuru country, the exalted Lord, the Lord of the Sacrifice, is eternally present in the form of the Boar. The earth-goddess worships Him, along with the inhabitants of that region, with unshaken devotion, and she recites this supremely secret *mantra* : 'Salutations to Thee, the Mahāpurusha, That mayest be truly known only from the *mantra* ; That art both the sacrifice with, and the sacrifice without the stake ; That hast the great sacrifices for Thy limbs. Salutations to Thee That art immaculately pure by virtue of the Vedic *karma* (as the offerer of sacrifices), and art known as 'Triyuga'. And she prays, 'Salutations to Him Who remains hidden behind *karmas* and their fruits, but reveals Himself to the learned and intelligent inquirers who churn the body, the senses and other products of the *guṇas* to find Him, as a log of wood is churned for fire. Salutations again and again to Him Who is revealed as the one Reality to those who look for It, separating It from substance, the activity of the organs of sense and action, the gods, the body, time, which starts all action, and the ego—all of them the products of the *guṇas* of Māyā. Salutations to Him Who is seen as He is, negating the form He assumes by His own Māyā, by men whose perception is unerring by reason of their careful investigation and the disciplines (like *yama* and *niyama*) it has undergone. Salutations to Him Who is the Witness of the *guṇas* and the *karmas* of the *jīva*, and following the prompting of Whose glance, inspired not by any desire of His own, but for the sake of the *jīva*, Māyā effects, by means of her own *guṇas*, the preservation, destruction and creation of the universe, even as iron obeys the magnet and is drawn towards it. I make my prostrations to the Supreme Lord, the Cause of the coming into existence of the universe, Who, as the divine Boar, carried me on the tip of His tusk like a tusk,

from Rasātala upward through the waters of the ocean at the Deluge, and vastly enjoyed Himself, having squashed to pulp the Asura who confronted Him like a rival elephant' (34-39).

CHAPTER XIX

THE GLORY OF BHĀRATAVARSHA

Sri Suka said : In the Kimpurusha country, Hanu-mān, the supreme devotee, who loves to serve at the feet of the exalted Lord, the First Cause, Rama, the elder brother of Lakshmana and the darling of Sita, worships Him, along with the residents of the country, with unremitting devotion. With Ārshtishēṇa, he listens to the eternally auspicious tale of his Lord and God, sung by the Gandharvas, and recites the following *mantra* : 'Om : Salutations to the exalted and illustrious Lord, to Him Who is distinguished by estimable qualities, nobility of disposition and excellence in conduct ; Who is self-controlled and ever solicitous to please all the world ; Who is the touchstone of all goodness and greatness ; and Who is devoted to the Brahmanas. Salutations to Him, our Almighty Lord and King of Kings'. And he prays thus : 'I make my submission to that One Reality Whose essence is immaculate Intuition ; Which has, by Its self-effulgence, negated the different mental states, and is established in peace ineffable ; Which, being devoid of name and form, is beyond perception and is untouched by the ego, but is rightly apprehended by the man of enlightenment. The all-powerful Lord elected to incarnate Himself as a man, not merely for the slaying of the Rākshasa, but for awakening the minds of mortals to their predicament and showing them how they should conduct themselves. How else could He, the Lord of the universe and its Soul, Who delights in the Self, grieve over His separation from Sita ? He, the very Self of all men of light, and their greatest well-wisher, is none other than Vāsu-deva, Who abides in all that exists, and knows no attachment to anything in the three worlds ; hence He could

not have given way to the despondency caused by attachment to a woman, nor could He have repudiated Lakshmana. He is not pleased with anyone because of his rank or good looks, his gifts of speech or intelligence, or his place in the hierarchy of beings. Did not He, the elder brother of Lakshmana, make friends with us, the apes of the jungle, who are totally devoid of those advantages? So everyone, be he god or Asura, ape or man, should devote himself with all his soul to the worship of Rama, the Supreme Lord Hari incarnate as man, Who richly rewards the slightest merit. He led the whole population of Uttara Kosala to heaven' (1-8).

In Bhāratavarsha, the Lord, Whose ways are inscrutable, practises under the name of Nara-Narayana—having vowed to do so to the end of the Kalpa from His compassionate desire to bless those men who have achieved self-control—the austerities which lead to the attainment of the Self by promoting growth in Dharma, Jñāna, detachment, *yogic* power, control of the breath and the senses, and the abjuring of the egoistic impulses. Nārada, who will impart to Sāvarṇi, the Manu (of the next Manvantara), the Sāṅkhya and Yoga taught by the Lord, as well as the scripture (Pāṇcharātra) that proclaims His glory, worships Him with infinite love in his heart along with the people of Bhāratavarsha, who are faithful to the Varṇāśrama Dharma. He recites the following *mantra*: 'Om: Salutations to the exalted Lord Nara-Narayana, foremost of *rshis*, Who is ever self-controlled and wholly free from egotism; Who is the master of those whose delight is all in the Self; Who is looked upon by the supreme renouncers (the Paramahamsas) as their wealth, and whose chief Teacher He is'. And he sings His praises thus: 'Salutations to Him, Who is the Witness in the heart of the world, aloof and unattached. He is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the world and yet is wholly immune to its influence. Though tenanted a body, He is not affected by its disabilities. While He sees all things, the world of objects cannot corrupt His vision. O master-yogi, the blessed Lord Hiranyagarbha has pointed out that he is the true adept in yoga who, by virtue of his lifelong devotion to Thee, is able to free

his mind from attachment to this worthless body and fix it on Thee, the Brahma devoid of all attributes, when his end approaches. If the learned man should behave like the common run who are terrified of the prospect of death of this worthless body because they thirst after pleasure here and hereafter, and are filled with anxiety about wife and children and money, all his learning is so much labour wasted. Therefore, O Almighty Lord Adhokshaja, grant that we may incline our hearts naturally to Thee, and quickly snap the bond of possessiveness towards this contemptible body, which has been imposed on us by Thy Māyā and which it is impossible otherwise to break' (9-15).

In this Bhāratavarsha, too, there are many rivers and mountains. The mountains are Malaya, Mangalaprastha, Maināka, Trikūta, Rshabha, Kutaka, Kollaka, Sahya, Devagiri, Rshyamūka, Srisaila, Venkata, Mahendra, Vāridhāra, Vindhya, Suktimān, Rkshagiri, Pāriyātra, Droṇa, Chitrakūta, Govardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nila, Gokāmukha, Indrakila, Kāmagiri, and thousands of others; and from their flanks countless rivers take their rise and flow east and west. The people of Bhāratavarsha bathe in these waters, which purify by their very names. Chandravasā, Tāmrapaṇi, Avatodā, Krtamālā, Vaihāyāsī, Kāveri, Veṇi, Payasvinī, Sarkarāvarta, Tunga-bhadrā, Krishnā, Venyā, Bhīmarathī, Godāvari, Nirvin-dhyā, Payoshnī, Tāpī, Revā, Surasā, Narmadā, Charmaṇvati, Sindhu, Andha (Brahmaputra) and Sona—(these two streams run west)—Mahānadi, Vedasmṛti, Rshikulyā, Trisāmā, Kauśiki, Mandākinī, Yamunā, Sarasvati, Drshadvati, Gomati, Sarayū, Rodhaswati, Saptavati, Sushomā, Satadrū, Chandrabhāgā, Marudvrdhā, Vitastā, Asiknī and Viswā, are the great rivers (16-18).

Only by men born in this country (Bhāratavarsha) is achieved, as a result of their own *karmas*, *sāttvic*, *rājasic* or *tāmasic* in character, sojourn in heaven, on earth, or in hell, since all births result in due order from their own past *karmas*; and in this very life men born in this country can attain liberation too by living in conformity with the rules laid down for their *varṇas*. And that liberation takes the form of disinterested devotion to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Ātman,

and the Soul in all existents, Who is free from the passions that go with the body, and is beyond the reach of words, and Who rests on no support. And it is the result of his being thrown into the company of the Lord's devotees and the consequent cutting of the knot of nescience, the cause of endless, diverse births (19-20).

It is this human birth that the gods extol, saying, 'Ah, what meritorious thing did these people do—or did Hari do it for them of His own accord, being pleased with them?—that they should have been blest with birth as men in this country, Bhāratī, where it is possible to worship Mukunda, a birth for which we can only long in vain! What use is this trivial conquest of heaven, which we have achieved by the offering of exceedingly difficult sacrifices, by the practice of austerities, the taking of vows and the giving of gifts, seeing that in heaven we do not remember the lotus feet of Narayana because of our ecstatic absorption in the pleasures of the senses? Better far to win the brief tenure of a man's life in Bhāratavarsha, since men who have achieved self-control can reach straightway Hari, the Sanctuary, by resigning into His hands the *karmas* done through the perishable body in that short moment, than to gain the worlds where one may spend an eternity but must come back in the end and be born again. One should not care for any goal, even the world of Brahmā, where there do not flow the streams that carry the nectar of the tales that tell of the Lord of Vaikuntha, or where the devotees of the Lord, who are attracted by them, are not to be found, or where the worship of the Lord of the Sacrifice is not celebrated with rejoicings. Those creatures who, having attained birth as human beings here (in Bhāratavarsha), and being equipped with all the means—knowledge, the religious rites that produce knowledge, and the materials needed for those rites—do not strive to escape rebirth, will again fall into bondage, like the unwary birds of the jungle (21-25).

When the sacrificer, full of faith, calls on the different deities to receive the specific offerings made to each of them by name with the appropriate *mantras* and in strict accordance with the rules, it is the Supreme Lord, and He alone, that receives the offerings with all glad-

ness, Dispenser of blessings though He is, and Perfection itself. It is true that the Lord grants whatever men pray for, but He does not confer that lasting good which is supremely to be desired ; for it is seen that men continue in want even after gaining what they had longed for. But, without any request from those who worship Him and ask nothing of Him, He confers upon them the blessings of His lotus feet, which blot out all desires. If aught remains to us yet of the merit of good deeds done by us—offerings made in the fire, exposition of the Veda, or other—may that help us to birth in Ajānābha (Bhārtavarsha) with minds that remember Hari, for Hari looks after the welfare of His devotees' (26-28).

Srī Suka continued his exposition : Some say, O King, that Jambū-dvīpa has eight subsidiary islands, which came into existence when this earth was dug deep all around by Sagara's sons searching for the horse. They are known as Svarnaprastha, Chandraśukla, Āvartana, Ramanaka, Mandarahariṇa, Pāñchajanya, Simhala and Lankā. And now, O best of the Bharatas, I have told you of the different countries comprised in Jambū-dvīpa, as taught (by my Guru) (29-31).

CHAPTER XX

PLAKSHA AND OTHER CONTINENTS

Srī Suka said : We shall now describe the divisions into countries of Plaksha and other continents, with reference to their size, characteristics and formation. This Jambū-dvīpa is surrounded by the salt sea, which is of the same width as the Dvīpa itself, as the Meru mountain is surrounded by the Dvīpa. Likewise, the salt sea is surrounded by Plaksha, which is twice as wide, like the forest belt round a moat. The *Plaksha* (fig) tree, which is of the same size as the Jambū tree, and which gives its name to the continent, grows in it, and under it sits the fire-god, Saptajihvā. Its monarch, Idhmajihvā, son of Priyavrata, divided his island continent into seven countries, and allotting them to his seven sons, who bore their names, attained liberation through the Yoga of the Self. Sivam, Yavayasam, Subhadram,

Sāntam, Kshemam, Amṛtam and Abhayam are the names of the countries. Only seven mountains and seven rivers in them are well known. The mountains that mark the boundaries of the countries are Manikūta, Vajrakūta, Indrasena, Jyotishmān, Suparṇa, Hiranyash-tiva and Meghamālā. The major rivers are Aruṇā, Nṛmṇā, Angirasī, Sāvitrī, Suprabhātā, Ṛtambharā and Satyambharā. Purified of *rajas* and *tamas* by bathing in their waters, the inhabitants of these countries, who are divided into four *varṇas* designated as Hamsa, Patanga, Ūrdhvāyana and Satyānga, live for a thousand years, resembling the gods in the beauty and perfection of their form, and their mode of begetting progeny. They worship the exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, in the form of the sun-god, who is the gateway to heaven and the embodiment of the three Vedas, with the ritual taught by the Veda, and recite this *mantra* : ' We make our submission to the sun who is the visible form of the Primordial Lord Vishnu, Director and Controller of truth in action and truth in thought, the Soul of the Veda and the Dispenser of the fruits of good and evil.' In the five island continents beginning with Plaksha, all men are by birth endowed uniformly with length of life, perfection of sense faculties, energy, powers of endurance, strength, intelligence and prowess (1-6).

Just as Plaksha is surrounded by the ocean of cane-juice, which is just as wide, so is the Sālmala-dvīpa, which is twice as wide (as Plaksha), surrounded by the ocean of liquor which is of the same width as itself. There stands the Salmali (silk-cotton) tree, which is as big as the Plaksha, and which is the home of the King of the birds (Garuda), who praises the Lord with Vedic hymns. That tree gives its name to the whole continent. The ruler of that island-continent, Yajñabāhu, the son of Priyavrata, divided his realm between his seven sons and named the seven divisions after them ; they are known as Surochana, Saumanasya, Ramanaka, Devavarsha, Pāribhadra, Āpyāyana and Avijnāta. Among the mountains and rivers in them only seven of each are well known ; the mountains are Svarata, Sataśṛṅga, Vāmadeva, Kunda, Mukunda, Pushpavarsha and Sāhas-raśruti ; and the rivers, Anumati, Sinīvālī, Sarasvati,

Kuhū, Rajanī, Nandā and Rākā. The inhabitants of these countries are divided into four classes designated as Srutadhara, Vīryadhara, Vasundhara and Ishandhara; they worship the exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, in the form of the moon-god, who stands forth as the Veda, uttering the Vedic hymns, and reciting the following *mantra*: 'Providing the manes and the gods with their food in the black and white fortnights (respectively), through his rays, may the moon-god protect us all as our King' (7-12).

Beyond the sea of liquor lies Kuśa-dvīpa, surrounded by the sea of clarified butter, which is as big as the island-continent, which is twice as big as the Sālmali-dvīpa. Therein is a clump of *kuśa* grass which was created by the Lord Himself, and which gives its name to the continent; like a second fire, it lights up all the directions with the brilliance of its tender shoots. The ruler of that continent, Hiraṇyareta, son of Priyavrata, divided his realm equally, O King, between his seven sons, Vasu, Vasudāna, Dṛdharuchi, Nābhigupta, Stutya-vrata, Vivikta and Vāmadeva, and himself engaged in the practice of austerities. In those countries, the well-known boundary mountains and rivers are only seven each; the mountains being Chakra, Chaturṅga, Kapila, Chitrakūta, Devānika, Ūrdhvaromā and Dṛaviṇa, and the rivers, Rasakulyā, Madhukulyā, Mitravindā, Srutavindā, Devagarbhā, Ghṛtachyutā and Mantramālā. With the waters of these rivers, the inhabitants of Kuśa-dvīpa, divided into four classes known by the names of Kuśāla, Kovida, Abhiyukta and Kulaka, worship the exalted Lord in the form of fire, through the skilled performance of *karmas*. 'You, O fire, carry oblations to Hari, the Para Brahma Himself, directly. So through the sacrifices offered to the different gods, who are but His limbs, you should propitiate (on our behalf) the Supreme Lord Himself' (13-17).

Beyond the ocean of ghee lies the Krauncha-dvīpa, which is twice as big and is surrounded on all sides by the milky sea of the same size, just as the Kuśa-dvīpa is by the ocean of ghee; therein stands the great mountain Krauncha, which gives its name to the island continent. Though its flanks and harbours were battered by Guha's

weapon, it was freed from fear, being drenched by the milky ocean and given protection by the Lord Varuṇa and thus saved from peril. The ruler of that continent, Gṛhaprśhtha, son of Priyavrata, divided his realm into seven divisions, named after his sons, and installed them as the rulers thereof; and being a *jñāni*, he betook himself to the worship of the lotus feet of the exalted Lord Hari of the auspicious renown, Who is none other than one's Self. His sons bore the names of Āma, Madhuruha, Meghaprśhtha, Sudhāmā, Brājishtha, Lohitārṇa and Vanaspati. The mountains that separate the different divisions and the well-known rivers are only seven each. The mountains are named Suka, Vardhamāna, Bhojana, Upabarhiṇa, Nanda, Nandana and Sarvato-bhadra; and the rivers, Abhayā, Amṛtaughā, Āryakā, Tirthavati, Vṛttirūpavati, Pavitravati, and Suklā. The people of those realms, falling into four classes named Puruṣa, Rṣhabha, Draviṇa and Devaka, worship the exalted Lord, Who manifests Himself as water, with libations of water made with cupped hands from the pellucid and purifying waters of those rivers, with the prayer, 'O waters, you who are endowed with potency by the exalted Lord, and therefore sanctify the earth, the upper air and heaven, should purify the bodies of us who touch you, since it is your nature to wash off sins' (18-23).

Beyond and around the milky ocean lies Sākadvīpa which is thirty-two lakh *yojanas* in width, and surrounded by a sea filled with whey, and of equal width; in it stands the tree called Sāka, which gives its name to the island continent, and fills the whole continent with the delicious perfume it emits. Its ruler was another son of Priyavarta, named Medhātithi; he, too, divided his realm into seven divisions which bore his sons' names and installed in them as rulers his sons Purojava, Manojava, Pavamāna, Dhūmrāṇika, Chitrarepha, Bahurūpa and Viśvadhara; and he himself entered the penitential woods with his mind fixed on the Lord Ananta. The boundary mountains and the rivers in these realms were only seven each; the former were called Isāna, Urusīṅga, Balabhadra, Satakesara, Sahasrasrota, Devapala, Mahānasa, and the latter Anagha, Ayurda, Ubhayasprśhti,

Aparājita, Panchapadī, Sahasraśruti and Nijadhṛti. The inhabitants of those regions, known by the class names of R̥tavrata, Satyavrata, Dānavrata and Anuvrata, worship the exalted Lord in the form of the Wind-god (Vāyu) by intense contemplation, their hearts purified of *rajas* and *tamas* by the practice of breath-control. They pray, 'May the Supreme Lord, the Inner Controller, who enters the bodies of all creatures (as the chief life-breath) and sustains them through (the five *prāṇas*, which are) the indicators of His presence, and in Whose hands this world lies, protect us' (24-28).

Likewise, beyond the sea of whey lies the Pushkara-dvīpa, which is twice as wide and is surrounded by a fresh water sea of the same width. Therein is the great lotus with a hundred million gold petals that dazzle the eye like blazing tongues of flame; it is the seat of the exalted Lord Who has the lotus for His seat. In the middle of that island continent stands the mountain known as Mānasottara, which is the boundary between the only two divisions that constitute the continent. It is ten thousand *yojanas* in height and width. On this mountain stand, in the four quarters, the capital cities of Indra and the other Guardians of the worlds. And over it revolves the wheel of the sun's chariot, which makes one year, rotating round Meru in the course of the Uttarāyaṇa and the Dakṣiṇāyana, which constitute one day and one night for the gods. The ruler of this continent is Veetihotra, son of Priyavrata. Installing his sons, Ramaṇaka and Dhātaki, in the rulership of the two divisions of the island continent, he remained, like his elder brother, wholly dedicated to the *karma* that is pleasing to the Lord. The people of that region worship the exalted Lord in the form of Brahmā by performing the *karmanas* that win for one the world of Brahmā and other similar rewards, and they praise Him in these words: 'Salutations to the blessed Lord, whom all men should worship; He is the concrete goal of all good works, through whom the Brahma may be known, because He is wholly intent on It, and is thus no different from It; and He is perfect Peace' (29-33).

The sage (Suka) went on: Beyond that (fresh water sea) lies the mountain chain called Lokāloka between the

world lighted by the sun, which it encircles, and that where no sun shines. (Between the fresh water sea and the Lokāloka mountain there is, first,) a region as wide as that between the Meru and the Mānasottara mountains; and beyond that, another region, which is all gold and which shines like the surface of a mirror. Anything that falls into it cannot be recovered. Therefore it is avoided by all things living. The name Lokāloka is derived from the fact that it divides the seen world from that which is not visible. It has been placed beyond the three worlds and round them by the Supreme Lord. And it is so wide and high that the rays of the sun and other luminaries up to the pole-star light up all the three worlds within its boundaries, but cannot penetrate beyond. Such is the terrestrial globe in disposition, extent, physical features and configuration, as those who know have described them. Of the earth, which is fifty crores (of *yojanas*) in extent, the Lokāloka mountain takes up one-fourth (34-38).

Beyond the Lokāloka mountain, the Self-created Lord (Brahmā), Ruler and Mentor of all the worlds, has stationed in the four quarters the four lordly elephants, R̥shabha, Pushkarachūda, Vāmana and Aparājita, who maintain the stability of the worlds. In order to infuse into them, and into the Guardians of the worlds, who are His own fractions, the various kinds of puissance needed by them, and to ensure the welfare of the worlds, the exalted and paramount Lord Vishnu, Who commands all supernatural powers and Who is the Inner Ruler in all creatures, abides on the great mountain, displaying Himself everywhere in His form compact of pure *sattva* and characterized by the eight supernatural perfections, as well as Dharma, Jñāna, dispassion, puissance and the rest. He is armed with His own splendid weapons, and He is attended by Vishvaksena and other chiefs of His personal retinue. It should be understood that the Lord makes His ubiquitous presence felt in this fashion to ensure the protection of all the worlds created by the power of His own Yoga-Māyā (39-41).

The extent of the region beyond the Lokāloka mountain is known when the dimensions of the world

on this side of the mountain are given, for it is the same. Beyond it lies, they say, the region to which only the great master-yogis can penetrate. The sun is stationed in the centre of the cosmic egg, midway between the top and the bottom of the shell. It is equidistant from every part of the shell, the distance being twenty-five crores of *yojanas*. The sun-god is called Mārtanda, because he entered the lifeless egg; and Hiraṇyagarbha, because he was generated within its shining orb. It is because of the sun that we are able to distinguish the different quarters, the upper air, the heavens, the earth, in fact every division, and likewise the celestial worlds, the worlds to which the liberated souls go, the various hells, and the nether worlds. The sun is the soul, as well as the deity that rules the eyes, of the gods, of men, the inferior creation and all other creatures, moving or non-moving, including plants and shrubs (42-46).

CHAPTER XXI

THE SUN'S CIRCUIT IN THE HEAVENS

Srī Suka said: So far I have described the arrangement of the terrestrial globe with the dimensions and chief features of its various parts. The extent of the heavenly sphere is described by those who know as answering to that of the earth, as the upper shell of the pea corresponds to the nether one; and the upper air lies in between, and is connected with both of them. The all-powerful sun, foremost of all scorchers, who from his central place warms with his heat and lights up with his rays the three worlds, goes up and down (the zodiac) at the appointed time with the accelerated, retarded and even speeds characteristic of the different seasons, the Uttarāyaṇa (northern declination), the Dakṣiṇāyana (southern declination) and the Vaishuvata (equinox); making the days longer, shorter, or equal to the nights, as he transits through Makara and the other zodiacal divisions in succession. Days and nights are equal during his transit through Aries and Libra; when he moves through the five signs, Taurus and the following, the days grow longer, while every month the

nights become shorter by one *ghatika* (twenty-four minutes). When he moves through the five signs, Scorpio and the rest, then the lengths of the day and the night are reversed. From Uttarāyaṇa to Dakṣiṇāyaṇa, the days go on increasing, while the nights go on lengthening from Dakṣiṇāyaṇa to Uttarāyaṇa (1-6).

The sun's circuit of the Mānasottara mountain covers a distance of nine crores and fifty one lakhs of *yojanas*. On the Mānasottara mountain, they say, are located, to the east of Meru, the city of Indra known as Devadhānī, to the south, the city of Yama called Samyamanī, to the west the city of Varuṇa named Nīmlōchanī, and to the north the city of Soma called Vibhāvārī. For those who live on the four sides of the Meru, the sun is said to rise, to reach the meridian, to set, and to arrive at the midnight hour in these four cities at different times, thus enabling them to work and to rest. For those who are there (on the Meru itself), the sun is always at the meridian. While actually holding on his course, which keeps the Meru mountain on the left, he is found to have it on his right.¹ The sun sets at a point exactly opposite to that in which he rises. While he burns fiercely at midday at one place, causing all creatures to sweat, he brings deep sleep and forgetfulness to the people who live in the place that is exactly opposite to it. And those who had seen him the day long do not see him when he is there. The sun's transit from the city of Indra to that of Yama takes fifteen *ghatikas* and covers a distance of a little more than two crores and thirty-seven and a half lakhs of *yojanas*. The same time is taken by his transit from there to the city of Varuṇa, from the latter to the city of Soma and from there to the city of Indra back again. In the same way the moon and the other planets rise and set in due course along with the constellations in the zodiac. The sun's chariot, which is of the substance of the Vedas, goes round the four cities, covering a distance of thirty-four lakhs and eight hundred *yojanas* in a *muhūrta* (forty-eight minutes) (7-12).

The single wheel of the chariot of the sun, which has the twelve months for spokes, the six seasons for

¹ For explanation see para 2 of Chapter XXII.

fellies, and the three four-month periods for naves, is known as the year. One end of its axle-tree is fixed on the top of Mount Meru, while the other rests on Mānasottara. And the wheel, rotating on that axle, moves along the Mānasottara mountain like the single wheel of the oil-mill. Another axle-tree, measuring one-fourth of the length of the first, has one end of it fixed on the first axle, like the axle-tree of the oil-mill, while the other is joined to the pole-star. The inside of the chariot is thirty-six lakhs of *yojanas* in length and a quarter of it in breadth. And to the yoke of the sun's chariot, which is as long, are yoked by Aruṇa seven horses which are called by the names of the Vedic metres; they bear the sun-god. Aruṇa, who sits in front, but with his face turned to the sun-god, is the charioteer. The Vālakhilyas, sixty-thousand sages of the size of the top phalange of the thumb, extol the sun by chanting the Vedic hymns as they move facing him. In the same way, seven different groups—these being sages, Gandharvas, Apsarases, Nāgas, Grāmaṇīs, Rākshasas and gods—represented by two of each group every month and bearing various names,—serve in different capacities the sun-god, the soul of the world, who is known by different names in the different months. He transits the circumference of the earth, which is nine crores and fifty lakhs of *yojanas*, at the rate of two thousand *yojanas* and two *krośas* per second (13-19).

CHAPTER XXII

THE MOON AND OTHER PLANETS

The King asked: 'You, venerable sir, said that the sun, while circumambulating the Meru mountain and the pole-star, goes counter-clock-wise within the zodiac, facing the signs. How are we to understand this (apparent contradiction)?' (1)

He (Suka) answered: While the potter's wheel revolves, such creatures as ants, which happen to be on it, are carried in the same direction, and yet they move on it in different directions, as is shown by the fact that they are found in places different from where they were

seen at an earlier time. Likewise, while the zodiacal belt, with its divisions and the constellations on it, moves round the pole-star and the Meru, the sun and the planets, which revolve with it, traverse the constellations and the zodiacal signs in different directions, as is seen from their presence in a constellation and a zodiacal sign different from those in which they were found earlier (2).

The sun-god, who is none other than the Lord Narayana, the Prime Cause of creation, Whom men of enlightenment are, like the Vedas, always seeking to know by inquiry, and Who takes a form that is of the substance of the Veda, divides himself, for the sake of the welfare of the worlds, into twelve parts, functionally speaking, thus making for the fruitfulness of the *karmas* that men do, and endows the different seasons, spring and the rest, with their characteristic traits, so that men may enjoy the appropriate fruits of their works. Those who are faithful to the codes of *Varṇāśrama-dharma* worship him with all faith through the performance of *karmas*, big and small, prescribed in the three Vedas, and by the practice of yoga and devotion, and thus easily gain the highest ends. The sun-god, who is the soul of the worlds, mounted on the wheel of time, which is poised in the upper air, midway between earth and heaven, passes through the twelve months that make up the year and are known by the names of the different zodiacal signs. The month consists of two fortnights, the dark and the bright, according to the lunar reckoning. It is one day and one night (for the manes). And in the course of one month the sun transits the space occupied by two constellations and a quarter. The period he takes to traverse one-sixth of the length of the zodiac is called a season, another division of the year. The time he takes to traverse one-half of the zodiacal belt is called an 'ayana'. The period that he takes to make a circuit of the entire firmament, between earth and heaven, is called by different names, 'samvatsara', 'parivatsara', 'idā-vatsara', 'anuvatsara' and 'vatsara', to denote the reckoning of the period in different ways according as it takes into account the acceleration, retardation and even movement of the sun's transit (3-7).

The moon, which to the observer appears to be one hundred thousand *yojanas* above the sun's orb, moves with exceeding quickness, covering the sun's annual round in two fortnights, his monthly transit in two and a quarter days, and his fortnightly progress in a day when it is in accelerated motion. Constituting by its waxing and waning the white and the black fortnights, which are a day and a night for the gods and the reverse for the manes, the moon, which is the life and soul of all creatures, providing as it does their means of sustenance, passes through a constellation in thirty *muhūrtas*. The moon-god with his sixteen digits is the deity that presides over all minds. Being the source of all sustenance and the bestower of life, he is spoken of as 'all that is'; he sustains and nourishes every creature—the gods, the manes, men, spirits, animals, birds, reptiles and vegetation (8-10).

Three hundred thousand *yojanas* above the moon are the constellations, twenty-eight in number, including the Abhijit, which have been fixed by the Lord in the wheel of time, and which move round Meru, keeping always to the left of it. Two hundred thousand *yojanas* above them is Uśanas (Venus) who is better known as Sukra; he moves before, after or along with the sun, and like the latter, with accelerated, retarded or even speed; almost always sending rain for the benefit of all creatures. From the fact that his accelerated motion brings rain, it is inferred that he counteracts the influence of any planet that is unfavourable to the onset of rain. When the effects of Sukra have been described, those of Budha also are as good as known. He is the son of the moon and situated two hundred thousand *yojanas* above Uśanas. He is almost always auspicious; but when he moves far away from the sun, he portends heavy winds, the advent of clouds which bring little rain and other such evils. Two hundred thousand *yojanas* above him is Angāraka (Mars), who transits each of the twelve zodiacal signs in three fortnights, unless he is retrograde. He is generally inauspicious and indicates evil. Two hundred thousand *yojanas* above him is the blessed Brhaspati (Jupiter), who moves through each sign in one year ('parivatsara'), unless he is retrograde. He is

almost always a benefic, so far as Brahmanas are concerned. Two hundred thousand *yojanas* above him appears Sanaiśchara, (Saturn), who lingers thirty months in each sign, and usually traverses all the signs of the zodiac in as many years. And he is generally destructive of men's peace of mind. Eleven hundred thousand *yojanas* above him are the seven sages (the Great Bear), who circumambulate the supreme abode of the exalted Lord Vishnu, intent on the welfare of all the worlds (11-17).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE POLE-STAR AND THE OTHER STARS

Sri Suka said : Thirteen hundred thousand *yojanas* above the Seven Sages lies the supreme abode of Vishnu, of which they tell; where is to be found Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda, and first among the devotees of the Lord, whom Agni, Indra, the Patriarch Kaśyapa and Dharma, whose span of life is as long as his, keep to their right out of their great regard for him, as they (in the form of stars) move round him. He is the mainstay of all who live in this *Kalpa* to the very end. His greatness has already been described. While all the luminaries, planets, constellations and the rest, are made constantly to move by the power of the exalted Lord, Who functions as ever vigilant time and Whose speed is imperceptible, he (Dhruva) alone remains fixed and immovable as a post, by the grace of the Supreme Lord, and holds them all together, as he shines brilliantly. Just as cattle treading grain on the threshing floor, yoked to the central pole, walk round it back and forth in three circles, nearer and farther, keeping to their places; in the same way, the hosts of luminaries, planets and the rest, connected with the wheel of time at various points, above and below, remain revolving round the pole-star in three movements, moved by the wind (Pravaha), for the whole of the *Kalpa*. Like the clouds and the kites and other birds which, depending on and sustained by the air, move in the sky in pursuit of their objects, so the celestial bodies, which are the product of the

union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, keep moving in their orbits, thanks to their past *karma*, and do not fall down on the earth (1-3).

Some say that the hosts of the luminaries, which are assembled in the likeness of a porpoise, are maintained in their place by the sustained *yogic* power of the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. As the porpoise lies coiled, with its head hanging down, the pole-star is on the tip of the tail. Above it, on the tail are (the stars representing) the Patriarch (Kaśyapa), Agni, Indra and Dhruva, and at the point where the tail joins the body are Dhātā and Vidhātā, and on the waist the Seven Sages. On the right side of the porpoise, as it lies curled clock-wise, are the asterisms from Abhijit to Punarvasu, while on the left are those from Pushya to Uttarāshādhā. The asterisms are thus distributed equally on the two sides, like the limbs of the porpoise as it lies coiled. On its back is the group of constellations known as the Ajavīthi, and on its belly the heavenly Gangā (4-5).

To give the positions in greater detail, Punarvasu and Pushya are on the right and the left loins, Ārdra and Āśleṣha on the right and the left hind legs, Abhijit and Uttarāshādhā on the right and the left nostrils, Śravaṇa and Pūrvāshādhā on the right and the left eyes, Dhanishthā and Moolam on the right and the left ears, the eight constellations beginning with Maghā on the ribs of the left side, and the eight constellations that end with Mrgāśīrṣa—placed in the reverse order—on the ribs of the right side, and Satabhishak and Jyeshthā on the right and the left shoulders. On the upper jaw is Agasthya, on the lower Yama, on the mouth Mars, and on the anus, Saturn. Brhaspati is situated on the hump at the back of the throat, the sun on the chest, Narayana in the heart, the moon, in the mind, Uśanas in the navel, the Aśvin twins on the breasts, Budha in the *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* vital airs, Rāhu on the throat, the Ketu all over the body, and the star galaxies in the hairs on the body. Looking every evening silently and humbly at this form, comprising all the gods, of the exalted Lord Vishnu, one should worship Him with the *mantra*, 'Salutations to Him Who is the abode of the luminaries, the wheel of time, the Overlord of the gods, the Mahā-

purusha.' Those who, thrice a day, recite this *mantra* or make their prostrations to, or meditate upon the Primordial Lord, the Highest of the gods, Who stands forth as all the planets, fixed stars and constellations, have their sins destroyed utterly even as they arise (6-9).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE NETHER WORLDS

Srī Suka said : Ten thousand *yojanas* below the sun is Rāhu ; which, according to some, moves like a constellation. This Rāhu, a worthless Asura, the son of Simhikā, undeservedly attained immortality and the status of a planet, by the compassionate grace of the exalted Lord. Of his birth and doings we shall speak later, my son. The orb of the sun shining yonder is said to be ten thousand *yojanas* in width ; the moon twelve thousand ; and Rāhu thirteen thousand. In his implacable enmity against the sun and the moon, between whom he had thrust himself (at the time of the churning of the ocean for nectar) he springs up to attack them, at the new moon and the full moon respectively. Seeing that, the Lord despatches His favourite weapon, the Śudarsāna, which whirls constantly by His puissance and is irresistible, for the protection of both the sun and the moon. Rāhu confronts it, but from a distance, for a *muhūrta* ; then, terrified and dismayed, he retreats precipitately. This brief encounter is described by men as the eclipse (1-3).

At the same distance but a thousand *yojanas* below (Rāhu) lie the mansions of the Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Vidyādhara. Below them lies the upper air, the playground of the hosts of Yakshas, Rākshasas, ghouls, spirits of the dead and elementals, which extends up to where the winds blow fiercely and clouds are to be found. A hundred *yojanas* below lies the earth, whose sphere extends up to the altitude to which the great birds, swans, vultures, hawks and eagles rise in their flights. We have already described the position and features of the earth (4-7).

Below the earth too are seven nether regions, each separated from the other by ten thousand *yojanas*; which is also the length and breadth of each of them. They are known by the names of Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasātala, Talātala, Mahātala and Pātāla. In these heavens beneath the earth live the Daityas, Dānavas and sons of Kadrū in mansions, gardens, pleasancess and recreation grounds, where are to be found, even in greater measure than in the celestial world, the delights of love, the joys of sovereign power, and affluence. The masters of the households live there in the company of their ever happy and loving spouses, children, relations, friends and attendants, the fulfilment of their wishes unfrustrated even by the lords of creation, and finding perpetual delight in the exercise of their magic powers. In these worlds, great King, are cities built by Maya, the wizard, which are adorned by splendid mansions, ramparts, *gopuras*, assembly halls, temples, squares, and rest-houses built of the best precious stones, and by the great palaces of the rulers of those worlds, with their raised platforms crowded with Nāga and Asura couples and with doves, parrots and mynās. Their gardens excel those of the celestial world in their glory; delighting the mind and the senses with the opulence of their trees—whose beautiful branches are bowed down under the weight of fruits and bunches of flowers and tender shoots and are embraced by clinging vines—and the joyous tumult of varied and charming bird-notes, as numberless pairs sport in gay abandon in their haunts, the beds of lotus and lily, *kumuda*, *kuvalaya*, *kalhāra* and *śatapatra*, which grow in the many lovely pools filled with crystal-clear water perpetually agitated by the darting shoals of fish. In these worlds there is not experienced that fear which arises from the division of day and night. The crest-jewels of the Chiefs of the great serpents dispel all darkness there by their lustre. By reason of the inhabitants of these regions utilizing the juices and the elixirs made from the celestial herbage for eating, drinking and bathing, they are not afflicted by mental or bodily ills; they have neither wrinkles nor grey hairs, signs of old age. They do not suffer from the tiredness and apathy that accompany

the fading of the complexion, the emission of foul body odour and sweating—all of them the symptoms of the onset of age. Nor does death ever overtake these happy creatures except when the Lord's anger is directed against them in the form of His discus. When that enters these regions, the pregnant Asura women abort or miscarry from sheer fear (7-15).

In Atala lives the Asura Bala, the son of Maya; he is the author of ninety-six magic arts, some of which are still practised by sorcerers. When he yawned, there came out of his mouth three groups of women, known respectively as 'Svairinī', 'Kāminī', and 'Pum-schali'. They make any man who enters that world potent for coition by feeding him with the magic potion called 'hātaka' and charm him with their wantonness, their playful glances, loving smiles, love-talk and embraces. When he has drunk that potion, the man imagines that he has gained the strength of ten thousand elephants, and boasts, like one blinded by lust, 'I am the Lord Almighty. I command every perfection'! (16).

In Vitala, which lies below that (Atala), the exalted Lord Hara, known there as Hātakesvara, lives, attended by His followers, the hosts of elementals. From His union with Bhavānī, with the object of furthering the work of creation by the patriarchs, flows the great stream Hātaki carrying their virility, which is consumed by the masterful power of fire aided by the wind. What the fire-god spews out of his mouth is the gold known as *hātaka*, which is wrought into various kinds of ornaments and worn by males and females alike in the households of the great Asura chiefs (17).

Below that, in Sutala, reigns to this day the illustrious Bali, son of Virochana, whose fame purifies all who come to hear of it. Deprived of the sovereignty of the three worlds by the exalted Lord—Who, wishing to do Mahendra's pleasure, was incarnate as Aditi's son, the boy celibate Vāmana—and placed by Him here (in Sutala), out of His abounding kindness, he enjoys a degree of opulence such as Indra and the like do not possess, and in unruffled serenity worships the exalted Lord, Who is worthy of all adoration, by the practice

of his own Dharma. His rulership of the neither regions is not, however, to be regarded as the sole (or the highest) fruit of his action in gifting away the earth, since nothing less than liberation was the meed of him who made that gift directly, with infinite faith and zeal, when the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Paramātmān, Who is, too, the Soul and Inner Ruler of all creatures, and the supreme fount of holiness, was present in His own person to receive the gift. Even the man who, in the act of sneezing or falling down or slipping on the ground, involuntarily utters His name for the nonce, frees himself without difficulty from the fetters of *karma*, which aspirants to liberation have to break by resort to other (and far more arduous) means. It can hardly be supposed that rulership of the nether region was the proper reward for one who made such a gift to Him, Who brings enlightenment to the *jnāni* while He gives even Himself to His devotee, looking upon Him as his own soul. Surely it was no blessing that the Lord conferred upon him (Bali) by bestowing upon him the opulent enjoyments, which were the creation of His own Māyā and were of the kind which makes one forget Him. When the Lord, finding no other way of achieving his purpose, resorted to the feint of begging and took away from him everything, including the sovereignty of the three worlds, leaving him only his own body, and he was bound by the noose of Varuṇa and thrown into a mountain cavern, he said, 'Alas for Indra, mighty and capable as he is, and though he had the exclusive benefit of the counsel of Brhaspati, he had so little judgment in regard to things that really matter that he ignored his advice and solicited the three worlds of me through Upendra, instead of begging of Him (Upendra) the privilege of devoted service to Him. What a trifle is the sovereignty of the three worlds, whose subversion a mere Manvantara sees accomplished, when one considers the infinitude of time! On his father's death, my grandfather would not accept his patrimony, a kingdom that was free from all troubles, though it was pressed upon him by the Lord, because it was something other than the Lord Himself, and he asked only for continued servitude to Him. How can any one

like me, who has not been purged of his passions or vouchsafed the Lord's Grace, even hope to walk in the footsteps of that exalted soul !' Later will be set out at length the story of Bali, at whose door the exalted Lord Narayana Himself, the Father of all the worlds, mounts guard, armed with His mace, out of the great love He bears His devotees. It was when He was thus engaged that, with a toss of His big toe, He sent the ten-headed Rāvana flying a distance of a hundred million *yojanas* when the latter came there in the course of his world conquest (18-27).

Below that, in Talātala, Maya, the chief of the Dānavas and ruler of Tripura, enjoys the homage of his followers. He had his Tripura burnt by the exalted Purāri (Śiva), intent on the welfare of the three worlds. But, by His Grace, this preceptor of all wizards obtained a new position (empire over this region), and being protected by Mahādeva, lives free from the fear of Sudarśana (the discus of Vishnu) (28).

Below that, in Mahātala, lives the brood of many-hooded serpents, the progeny of Kadrū, known as Krodhavaśa ('the irascible'). These have immense bodies. The chief among them are Kuhaka, Takshaka, Kāliya, Sushēṇa. They all live in perpetual terror of the sovereign overlord of all birds, Garuda, the mount of the Supreme Lord Hari; forgetting their fears only when they occasionally divert themselves in the company of their spouses, children, friends and relations. Further below, in Rasātala, live the progeny of Diti and the children of Danu, the Paṇis, whose three divisions are known as the Nivātakavachas, the Kāleyas and the inhabitants of Hirāṇyapura. They are extremely powerful and tenacious by birth. Their pride of strength humbled by the power (in the form of the discus) of the exalted Lord Hari, Whose glory pervades the three worlds, they hide like serpents in their holes. They go in terror of Indra, because of the threats uttered by Saramā, the celestial bitch, Indra's messenger, in the words of a Vedic hymn (29-30).

Below that, in Pātāla, live the rulers of the Nāgas (the great serpents), the chief of whom is Vāsuki. These, Sankha, Kulika, Mahāśanka, Sveta, Dhananjaya,

Dhṛtarāshtra, Sankachūda, Kambala, Aśvatarā, Devadatta, and so on, have immense hoods, and they are terrible in their ire. In the hoods of their heads, of which some have five, others seven and yet others ten, hundred and even thousands, blaze the great gems with which they were born, dispelling by their lustre the darkness that pervades the entire Pātāla (31).

CHAPTER XXV

THE LORD ANANTA

Srī Suka said : Underneath Pātāla, at a distance of thirty thousand *yojanas*, lives that digit of the Lord, representative of His *tāmasic* aspect, Who is described as Ananta, and Whom the followers of the Sātvata Tantra style Sankarshaṇa, because He is the ego with its possessiveness, which is the nexus between the seer and the seen. The terrestrial globe looks like a mustard seed, borne on one of the thousand heads of the Lord Ananta. When He resolves, at the appointed time, to destroy the world, the three-eyed Rudra in his eleven-fold aspect, known as the offspring of Sankarshaṇa, springs, holding aloft the trident in His hand, from between His charming eyes as they quiver, crooked in an angry frown. The great serpent chiefs, bowing their heads, along with the great devotees, at His lotus feet, see with delight the reflection of their faces, made the more attractive by the glittering ear-pendants lighting up their cheeks, in the rows of round and ruddy toe-nails like polished gems. The daughters of the Nāga rulers, desiring His blessings, rub His arms which, set off by His charming torso, shine like silver pillars, long and white and winsome in their delicate loveliness, with unguents compounded of aloes, sandal, and saffron. Their hearts smitten with love by their touch, they smile demurely ; and as He, pleased with the fervour of their love, looks at them with a kindly, affectionate glance, from the rolling eyes that are tipsy-red, they look bashfully at the lotus face. He, the exalted Lord Ananta, Who is none other than the Prime Cause of the universe and a veritable ocean of all auspicious traits, contains His impatience, restrains His

anger and remains in that place, intent on the welfare of the worlds. While the company of the gods, the Asuras, the Uragas, the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Vidyā-dharas and the sages meditate on Him, the exalted Lord, His eyes ever in a whirl from the inebriate happiness which is His constant state, delights His own retinue and the Chiefs of the celestial hosts with the nectar of His soft speech. Decked with His garland of wild flowers, the Vaijayanti, whose loveliness is enhanced by the sweet hum of swarms of bees drunk with the fragrant honey of the holy basil, the charm of whose freshness never fades; clad in blue, and wearing an ear-pendant on only one ear; His beautiful hand resting on the handle of the plough; His knees held by the *yogic* cross-belt of gold that resembles the girth-rope of the lordly tusker, Mahendra's mount, He fascinates all by His magnificent playfulness. When the aspirant to liberation, having received instruction from a Guru, meditates upon the Lord as aforedescribed, He enters his heart, fashioned by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and quickly snaps the 'knot of the heart', which is nothing but ignorance imposed on it by the residual impressions of *karma* accumulated from an immemorial past. His greatness was sung by the blessed Nārada, the son of Śvyambhū, along with Tumburu, in the assembly of Brahmā in the following verses (1-8).

'How can the world know the truth of Him Who, by a mere glance, renders the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, capable of bringing about the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe; Whose form is eternal and beginningless, since the One Reality has projected on Itself this multifold universe? From His infinite compassion for us (His devotees), He, in Whom is manifested the universe of cause and effect, elected to display a form compact of pure *sattva*. To captivate the minds of His own folk, He, who is like the lion in His magnificent prowess, engaged in His flawless pastimes. When the man who is guilty of the most heinous sins is redeemed if he merely utters His name, either on hearing it pronounced by another, or by pure chance, or when in distress, or even in derision, Whom else but the exalted Lord Sesha can the aspirant to libe-

ration resort to ? Who, even if he had a thousand tongues, could reckon, since they are numberless, the exploits of Him, the Bhūmā (the Infinite Vast) of the limitless prowess, on one of Whose thousand heads is disposed, like an ant, the earth with its mountains, rivers, oceans, and living creatures ? The exalted Lord Ananta, Whose might is such, Whose strength is infinite, Whose virtues and greatness are measureless, abides at the bottom of the earth, Himself needing no support, and sustains the created world by bearing it lightly on His head as if it were mere play to Him' (9-13).

These are all the worlds which have been created in order that those men who entertain desires may go to them according to their *karmas*. I have described them as I have heard about them. I have now answered all your questions regarding the fruits, high, low, or of a mixed character, of the Dharmas that men who involve themselves in activity practise, O King. What else would you like to know ? (14-15).

CHAPTER XXVI

THE INFERNAL REGIONS

The King asked : 'How, O great sage, does the infinite diversity that constitutes the world of experience come about ?' (1).

The sage answered : Because the faith of the doer of *karma* is of three kinds, each dominated by one *guṇa*, the fruits of *karma* also vary ; and as the intensity of all men's faith varies, everyone reaps the most diverse fruits in more or less degree. In the same way the man who is guilty of *adharma*, which is to be known by the fact that it is prohibited (by the Veda), reaps a diversity of fruits, depending on the nature of his faith. Numberless are the hells, which are the fulfilment of the desires entertained by men because of their primordial nescience. We shall now enumerate the chief of these (2-3).

The King asked : 'Are hells located in any region of the earth, or outside the worlds, or in between them ?' (4).

The sage answered : They are in between the three worlds, in the South, below the earth and above the water. In the same quarter live the communities of the manes, the Agnishvāttas and others, who by intense meditation on the Lord procure for those who belong to their *gotras* all true blessings they seek. There reigns the exalted Lord Vaivasvata, ruler of the manes ; along with his lieutenants he, who never transgresses the Lord's commandments, inflicts punishment of the same character as the crime and exactly proportioned to it, on the guilty, who, after death, are brought to his realm by his retainers (5-6).

Some reckon the number of hells as twenty-one. I shall give their names, forms and characteristics in due order. They are known as Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra, Raurava, Mahāraurava, Kumbhīpāka, Kālasūtra, Asīpatravana, Sūkaramukha, Andhakūpa, Kṛmibhojana, Sandamśa, Taptasūrmi, Vajrakantakasālmali, Vaitaraṇī, Pūyoda, Prāṇarodha, Viśasana, Lālābhaksha, Sārameyādana, Avīchi, and Ayah-pānam. Others add another seven to these—Kshāarakardama, Rakshogāṇabhojana, Sūlaprota, Dandaśūka, Avatanirodhana, Paryāvartana, and Sūchī-mukha—thus reckoning twenty-eight hells in all, in which the guilty suffer tortures (7).

He who appropriates to himself another's wealth, children or wife, is bound with the noose of death by Yama's frightful retainers and thrown into the hell Tāmisra full of darkness. Tortured by denial of food and drink, beaten with sticks, intimidated by dire threats and other punishments, the creature is plunged into the depths of despondency and forthwith loses his consciousness. In Andhatāmisra is lodged the man who, deceiving the husband, enjoys his wife and possessions. From the tortures he suffers he becomes unconscious and blind, like the big tree when it is felled down ; hence this hell is called Andhatāmisra. The man who, looking upon his body as his Self and upon wealth and the rest as his possessions, pampers his own family, constantly inflicting misery on others, leaves that family behind him and dies, only to be thrown into the hell called Raurava, earned by his own wickedness. Those creatures whom he had injured in this world appear as

'rurus' where he is undergoing the tortures ordered by Yama, and injure him as he had injured them; hence that hell is called *Raurava*, 'ruru' being the name given to a creature far more cruel than the serpent. In Mahāraurava, the class of *rurus* called 'kravyāda' (eater of carrion), devour for his flesh the man who has been lodged there because he had been intent only on pampering his body (8-12).

The exceedingly cruel man who cooks live birds and beasts and whom even the Rākshasas (cannibals) condemn, is boiled by Yama's minions in oil in the hell called Kumbhipāka. The man who has been the enemy of his father, of the Brahmana and of the Veda, is thrown into the hell called Kālasūtra, which is ten thousand *yojanas* in circumference, being level ground covered with copper and burning hot by exposure to fire below and sun above; suffering from hunger and thirst, he is scorched inside as well as outside, as he sits, lies down, tosses his hands and feet wildly, skips and jumps and runs about, for as many years as there are hairs on the body of an animal. He who defaulted in the duties ordained by the Veda, when there was no compelling reason to do so, and followed the teachings of the heretics, is taken to Asipatravana and whipped; frantically running hither and thither, he has his flesh rent by the sword-sharp double-edged leaves of the palm trees there and stumbles down at every step, crying distractedly in extreme agony, 'Alas I am undone, all is over with me!' Thus the man who violates his own *dharma* reaps the fruit of his heresy (13-15).

The wicked man who, being a King or a King's official, punishes one who is innocent, or deals out corporal punishment to a Brahmana, falls into the hell called Sūkaramukha, and has all his limbs twisted and crushed by exceedingly strong persons as the sugar-cane is crushed; and he moans in his suffering and again and again falls into a stupor—as those had done whom he had punished, though no guilt had been brought home to them. The man who, being himself provided with the means of livelihood by the Lord, and endowed with intelligence and discrimination, tortures those creatures who live by the means that God has appointed them,

but have no knowledge of the suffering they inflict on others, falls into the hell called *Andhakūpa* because of the sufferings he has caused them, and is there attacked from all sides by domesticated and wild animals, by birds and reptiles, mosquitoes, lice, bed-bugs and stinging flies and all other creatures that he had tortured, and unable to find even the rest that sleep brings, or to stay in one place for any time, constantly flits about in the darkness of hell like the *jīvas* imprisoned in unhealthy bodies (16-17).

The man who eats what he gets by chance, without sharing it with others or offering the five *yajnas*, and is thus classed with the crow, falls after death into that worst of hells, *Kṛmibhojana*. Transformed into a worm in a pit of worms, a hundred thousand *yojanas* in circumference, he is devoured by worms, as he himself subsists on them; and this eater of what has not been offered into the fire or shared with others, suffers this torture, which he has brought upon himself, as long as that sin remains unexpiated. He who has stolen from, or robbed a Brahmana of gold or gems that belong to him or got away with similar possessions of men of other *varṇas* when he had no overwhelming necessity to do so, is tortured, in the hell called *Sandamśa*, by Yama's men, O King, who sear his skin with burning balls of iron or tear it with pincers (18-19).

The man or woman who has unlawfully cohabited with a person of the other sex is whipped (in the hell called *Tapta-Sūrmya*) and made to hug a burning iron effigy of a member of the opposite sex. The man who has sexual union with every kind of animal is mounted on a silk-cotton tree in hell, which has adamantine spikes, and dragged on it. Those Kshatriyas or King's officials who, not being born in the families of heretics, violate the norms of *dharma*, fall after death into the *Vaitaraṇī*. In that river, which forms the moat round hell and which runs with ordure, urine, pus, blood, hair, nails, bones, fat, flesh and marrow, these violators of all decencies are set upon by cruel carnivore at every turn; being still burdened with body and life, they dolefully remember and grieve for the sins they brought on themselves by their own acts and the fruits of which they are reaping.

Those who shamelessly live like animals, consorting with Sūdra concubines, having discarded the restraints of purity, orthodox observances and self-discipline, fall after death into a huge reservoir of pus, ordure, urine, chyle and dirt, and feed on that horrid stuff (20-23).

Those men, Brahmanas and others, who own hounds and donkeys and delight in the chase and kill animals, when no ordained duty necessitates it, are, when dead, the target which Yama's men hit with their arrows. Those hypocrites who slaughter animals in sacrifices offered for show fall on their death into the hell called Vaiśasa where the supervisors torture them and cut them to pieces. That sinner of the twice-born classes who, blinded by lust, makes his wife, belonging to the same *varṇa* as himself, drink his semen, is after death thrown into the hell called Retah-kulyā and made to drink semen. Those who are guilty of robbery, arson and poisoning, and those Kings or King's soldiers who plunder and pillage villages or caravans, are violently attacked after their death by seven hundred and twenty hounds with adamant fangs, who are the messengers of death, and eaten. The man who lies as a witness, or in regard to money transactions or gifts, is, when he dies after much suffering, thrown headlong into the hell called Avīchimat, where there is no foothold, from the top of a mountain a hundred *yojanas* high. In that hell, Avīchimat, the hard rock-face looks misleadingly like water. Though his body is shattered to smithereens, he does not die; and taken to the same height, is again thrown down (24-28).

The Brahmana or his wife who drinks spirituous liquor, or the member of any other caste who does so when under vows, or the Kshatriya or the Vaiśya who drinks the *soma* juice, even if he does so by carelessness or oversight, is taken to hell where Yama's men, planting their feet on his breast, make him drink molten iron. The man who, himself of the lowest class, behaves in his haughty self-esteem disrespectfully towards those who are his superiors by birth as well as by their austerities and learning, the strictness of their observances, and their *varṇa* and *āśrama*, may well be regarded as no better than dead even when alive. He is thrown

headlong after death into the hell called Kshārakardama, where he suffers endless torments. When men who offer human sacrifices, and the women who eat the flesh of these victims, die, their dead victims, appearing as bands of Rākshasas in Yama's abode, torture them, cutting them with swords like butchers, drink their blood, dance and sing in joy, as the cannibals had themselves done when they lived on earth. Those who entice harmless creatures of the village or the forest, who are in love with life, and are lulled into confidence by their tricks, and impale them on spears or string them on cords, and torture them thus for fun, are themselves impaled after death on spears and other such things, as part of the tortures of hell, and suffer the pangs of hunger and thirst, as herons and 'vatas' attack and wound them with their sharp beaks, and they remember their own sins (29-32).

Those cruel men who cause suffering to others here like malignant serpents, fall after death into the hell called Dandaśūka, where they are set upon by such reptiles with five or seven heads and devoured as rats are devoured. Those who immure creatures in dark pits in the ground, in granaries or mountain caverns, are themselves trapped in similar holes in hell and choked with poisonous fumes and fire. The man who glowers in anger at the sight of an invited guest or of a chance arrival, as if he would burn him with his cross looks, has his eyes plucked out in hell by vultures, herons, crows and *vatas*, who attack him with beaks of an adamant strength and sharpness. The purse-proud, stuck-up fellow, who always looks at others covertly, suspecting everyone of designs on his purse, and whose heart and face are parched with perpetual anxiety lest he should lose his all by spending it or having it taken away from him, and who guards it like the goblin and never knows peace of mind, falls into the hell called Sūchīmukha because of the sins by which he earned, added to, and guarded his wealth and goods, and there the minions of Dharmarāja pierce and pass cords through the limbs of this sinful hoarder and stitch him up as tailors stitch garments (33-36).

There are hundreds and thousands of hells like

these in Yama's country, into every one of which all unrighteous sinners—the few whom I have described, as well as the many whom I have not—fall, each in his turn, O King, Likewise, the righteous enter heaven. And all of them take birth here in the world of men again, because of the unexpended portion of their accumulated merits or demerits (37).

I have told you at the very beginning of the way of non-involvement in *samsāra*. This (the three worlds) comprises the whole cosmos, which the Purāṇas describe as consisting of fourteen worlds. He who recites, listens to others' recital, or enables others to hear this account of what is no less than the gross form of the exalted Lord Narayana Himself, the Mahāpurusha, made up of the *guṇas* of His own Māyā, will be able to grasp with his intellect, purified and sharpened by faith and devotion, that subtle form of the Lord, the Supreme Ātman, of which the Upanishads speak and which it is exceedingly difficult to conceive. The ascetic who has heard the gross and the subtle forms of the Lord authentically described should, by the exercise of discriminating judgment, gradually lead his mind, once it is established in the contemplation of the gross form, to dwell on the subtle. Now I have finished the description, O King, of the wonderful gross form of the Supreme Lord, constituted by the complex of the island continents, their divisions, the rivers and mountains, the sky, the oceans, the nether worlds, the four quarters and the hosts of luminaries, which constitutes the home of all living beings (38-40).

(Here ends the *Fifth Book of Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD - BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF AJĀMILA THE SINNER

The King said : ' You, blessed one, described circumstantially the way of withdrawal from involvement in the world, by taking to which one in due course reaches Brahmā and attains liberation along with Him. You also described, O sage, the way of involvement in the world, which is the means of winning (heaven, and the pleasures of the senses, which are) the products of the three *guṇas* ; and which is also responsible for the re-birth again and again of the man who has not shaken off the hold of Prakṛti. You have described, too, the various hells, which are the fruit of Adharma and serve as reminders thereof. You have spoken at length of the first Manvantara, whose ruler was Svāyambhuva Manu, from whom was descended the race of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, and you have also set out their histories. You have described the island continents and their various parts, the oceans, mountains, rivers, gardens and fruit trees in them, and the disposition of the terrestrial globe, with its divisions, extent and characteristics, and the position of the luminaries and of the hells, and also told how the Lord created all this. Be pleased, O blessed one, to tell me now how one may escape falling into the hells where the most terrible tortures are inflicted' (1-6).

Srī Suka said : If the man who has sinned in thought, word or deed, does not offer expiation in this life itself, through the same means (that is, by thought, word and deed), he will assuredly go after death to those hells that I have described, in which cruel tortures have to be suffered. Therefore one should strive quickly, before death comes, and when one is still in possession of a sound body, to expiate one's sins by means adequate to

their seriousness, just as the physician, who diagnoses the disease correctly, administers remedies (7-8).

The King asked : 'When a man, who knows from what he sees and hears, that sinning will bring unpleasant consequences, sins again (even after expiation) because he cannot control himself, what use can expiation be to him? He might refrain for some time from what is evil and then revert to it. Therefore it seems to me that acts of expiation are of no more use than the bathing of the elephant' (9-10).

Srī Suka thus replied : No act can provide a radical remedy for the consequences of other acts ; since it is nescience that endows one with competence for following the way of works. It is knowledge of the Self that is the real expiation. The man who always eats wholesome food does not fall ill ; likewise, O King, the man who disciplines himself properly becomes gradually qualified for Self-realization. By practising concentration and continence, by disciplining the senses and the mind, by making gifts, cultivating the habit of truthfulness, the maintenance of purity, the abjuring of violence and the observance of vows, men of firm resolution, armed with faith and knowledge of Dharma, rid themselves of even heinous sins committed by thought, word or deed, as fire burns up the bamboo clump. But some few, who put their faith wholly in Vāsudeva, rid themselves of their sins completely, as the sun dispels the mist. The sinner is purified not so thoroughly, O King, by the practice of austerities and the like, as by coming, through service to His devotees, to the dedication of his life to Krishna. This is the best path available in this world for the aspirant ; it leads to liberation and is free from perils, and on it he will find saintly men of virtuous disposition, who put their trust wholly in Narayana. Acts of expiation practised by the man who has turned his face away from Narayana do not purify him, O King, any more than the waters of holy streams purify the pot of liquor. Those who, loving the Lord's glorious qualities, give their minds for a brief moment to the lotus feet of Krishna, expiate their sins thereby, and they do not see even in their dreams either Yama or his troops armed with the noose (11-19).

In this context there is told an old tale of a conversation between the retainers of Vishnu and the servants of Yama. Listen, while I tell you of it. In Kānyakubja there was a Brahmana called Ajāmila, who lived in concubinage with a servant-maid. Polluted by intercourse with her, and departing from the code of conduct approved by good men, he made a disreputable living as a housebreaker,¹ robber, gambler and cheat. Leading a sinful life, he inflicted suffering on living creatures to pamper his family. As he lived thus, cherishing and fondling the children born to him of her, a long time passed, eighty-eight years in fact, O King. The man had ten sons, the youngest of whom, Narayana, still a child, was his parents' darling. His heart bound up with the child, who could not yet speak distinctly, the greybeard delighted in looking at his pranks. While eating, drinking and chewing, the fool, in his infatuation with the child, would feed him and gave him to drink. Living thus, he did not know that death had come for him (20-26).

At the moment of death, the ignorant man thought of the child, whom he had named Narayana. Seeing three frightful-looking persons with cross faces and hair standing up like bristles, who had come armed with the noose to take him away, he in a state of extreme agitation called the child, who was absorbed in play at a distance, by his name Narayana in a loud voice trailing on a long, quavering note. Hearing the name of Hari uttered by the dying man, the attendants of Vishnu came there in all haste, great King, because it was the name of their Lord and Master. When Yama's messengers sought to pluck the life of Ajāmila, the servant-maid's paramour, out of his heart, the messengers of Vishnu prevented them by force (27-31).

The subordinates of Vaivasvata, thus stopped, asked them, 'Who are you that would prevent the execution of Vaivasvata's orders? To whom do you belong? Where do you come from? Why do you prevent our taking him away? Are you by any chance gods, demigods, or great yogis? All of you have eyes like lotus petals, and are clad in yellow silks. You wear diadems,

¹ (alt.) By kidnapping people and holding them to ransom.

ear-pendants and shining garlands of lotus. All of you are in the bloom of youth and possess four beautiful arms; your grandeur is enhanced by the bow and quiver, sword and mace, conch-shell, discus and lotus that you carry. You dispel by your effulgence the darkness of the quarters and dim the lustre of other lights. How could you stand in the way of our doing our duty? We are the servants of him who is the guardian of the norms of Dharma' (32-36).

Sri Suka went on : Thus asked by the messengers of Yama, those who executed the errands of Vāsudeva laughed, as they answered them in words that fell on the ear like thunder. The messengers of Vishnu said, 'If you have really come to execute the commands of Dharmarāja, you should be able to tell us of the true inwardness of Dharma and the marks by which it may be known. How is punishment dealt out? On whom should it be inflicted, and what for? What are the actions, the doers of which merit punishment? Is punishment to be meted out to all who do such actions or only to men, and among them, again, only to some?' (37-39).

The messengers of Yama answered, 'What the Veda enjoins is Dharma. What is contrary to it is Adharma. The Veda, we have heard, is none other than Narayana Himself, and it is self-existent. It is He Who creates in Himself all creatures out of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*, distinguishing them by their characteristic qualities, names, activities and forms. The sun, fire, the sky, air, the cows, the moon, the twilights, day and night, the quarters, water, earth, time and Dharma—these are the witnesses of what the living creature does. Adharma, which is known from their testimony, draws punishment upon itself. All doers of actions come in due course to deserve punishment. Men (inevitably) do both good and evil, O faultless ones, because the doers of actions are attached to the objects of the senses. And no creature can desist from action. It is the man who does an act, be it righteous or unrighteous, that reaps the fruits in the other world in the same manner and to the same extent. From the fact that all creatures fall into three classes because of the diversity of *guṇas*,

we may infer, O great gods, the existence of differences in other births also. One is reminded, by the characteristics of any particular season of the year, that they were found in the same season in previous years and may also be expected in the years to come. Likewise the Dharma and Adharma that a man practised in past lives and may practise in future lives, may be inferred from the life that he leads here (40-47).

'Our Lord (Yama) is able to see with his mind's eye, even from where he is in his city (Samyamānī), the former state of the *jīva* who comes before him. And, partaking as he does of the powers of the Unborn (Brahmā), he is in a position to determine, by giving thought to it, the future birth that would be appropriate to him. As the sleeper sees in his dream only his dream-body, which is then manifest, and not the body of his waking life or any other, so the ignorant *jīva* identifies himself with the body that he currently occupies but does not know either the body he had in an earlier life or the one he will have in the life to come, because he has lost all recollection of his past lives (48-49).

'He compasses his purposes by means of the five organs of action. He apprehends the objects of the senses through those senses. While he, the seventeenth *tattva*, is distinct from them all, he experiences through the sixteenth (the mind), the objects of the three, the (organs of action, the senses and the mind). The subtle body with its sixteen components composed of the three *guṇas*, which has been with the *jīva* from all eternity, involves him in the endless flux of *samsāra* with its attendant joy, grief, fear and suffering. The *jīva*, who is ignorant, and who has not overcome the six foes, is made to do actions against his will, and like the silk-worm in its cocoon, is immured within his *karmas* and is bewildered (not knowing the way out). No one remains for a single moment without doing some work; by his own innate propensities he is compelled to act. The *jīva* obtains, as the result of his past *karma*, a subtle body and a gross one resembling the father and the mother, of whom his birth is decreed in accordance with that past. This subversion of the status of the *jīva* was due to his wrongly identifying himself with Prakṛti.

By cultivating attachment to the Supreme Lord, he will quickly put an end to it (50-55).

'This man was well-versed in the Veda, and possessed of all good qualities. He was of an excellent disposition and exemplary conduct. He kept vows, was soft-hearted, self-controlled and truth-spoken. He was the master of *mantric* lore, and he led a blameless life. He faithfully tended the fires and assiduously waited on his Guru, guests and elders, and was free from egotism. He befriended all creatures. He avoided unnecessary speech and never cavilled at others. One day this Brahmana went to the forest, in obedience to his father's wish, and returned bringing with him fruits and flowers, and twigs to offer in the fire, and *kuśa* grass. He saw on the way a rake, a Sūdra, with a harlot, who had swilled strong spirits made from grain and was intoxicated, her eyes swimming, her girdle come loose. He saw the fallen man shamelessly playing with her, and singing and laughing. Seeing him embrace her with an arm smeared with sex-stimulants, he fell under her fascination and succumbed to his passion. Try as he might to steady, by an effort of will, his mind rocked by lust, summoning courage and knowledge to his aid, he failed. Possessed by the evil spirit which masquerades as love and which found its opportunity now, he was not in his right senses, and he could think of nothing but her and so defaulted in his duties. He propitiated her by spending all his ancestral wealth in procuring for her the rustic pleasures that ravished her mind. The wicked man, pierced to the heart by the harlot's sidelong glance, discarded his Brahmana wife, who had been given to him in marriage because of his high birth, and who had not yet attained age. By all means, fair and foul, he earned money and supported the family he had by the woman. Since he has for long years led a self-willed, wayward life, violating the injunctions of the Sāstra and earning the censure of the good by his sinful life, and has become impure by consuming polluted food, we are taking him, a wrong-doer who has not expiated his offence, to the Lord who chastises, so that punishment may cleanse him' (56-68).

CHAPTER II

THE POWER OF THE LORD'S NAME

Sri Suka said : Having heard and considered what the messengers of Yama said, the attendants of the Lord, who were skilled in doctrine, answered them thus. The messengers of Vishnu said, 'What a pity that the assembly of those whose business it is to determine what is Dharma, should be tarred with unrighteousness because of their inflicting punishment to no purpose on those who are sinless and do not deserve to be punished ! If those who should be as fathers and instructors to their subjects, promoting their interests and dealing with them justly, should themselves be partial and biassed, to whom can the subjects appeal for protection ? Whatever one who is high-placed does will be followed by others ; the example he sets will be followed by the world. If the common man, being himself no more able than an animal to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, lays his head trustingly on the lap of another and goes to sleep care-free, how can the latter, if he is at all worthy of such confidence and capable of pity, betray the ignorant man who had thus trusted him ? This man, now, has expiated the sins of millions of births by uttering, though involuntarily, the name of Hari which assures liberation. When this sinner managed to utter something like the four-letter word Narayana, by calling out, "Come here, Narayana", that alone should have amply served as expiation for his sins (1-8).

"The supreme expiation for every kind of sinner—be he thief or drunkard or betrayer of his friend, Brahmana-murderer, the violator of the sanctity of his Guru's bed, or the slayer of a woman or a King or his own father or a cow, or whatever other sin he was guilty of—is the utterance by him of the name of Vishnu because it draws Vishnu's attention to him. The sinner is not purified by the vows or other modes of expiation prescribed by the masters of Vedic lore so completely as he is by merely uttering some name of Hari ; for it will serve to remind him of the auspicious attributes of the illustrious Lord. That expiation is surely not complete,

in spite of which the mind again reverts to evil ways. Those who want to be totally freed from the consequence of their sinful actions, must sing the praises of Hari's gracious qualities, since that alone purifies the mind. As this man has wholly atoned for his sins by pronouncing the Lord's name when at the point of death, you should not take him along the wrong path (9-13).

'Men of old have known that all sins are destroyed by the uttering of the name of the Lord of Vaikuntha even casually, in calling somebody by name, or in jest, or as a meaningless vocable to sustain a chant or a melody, or in light-hearted badinage. No man who involuntarily exclaimed "Hari!" as he fell down, or slipped or broke a bone, when he was bitten by something, or had fever, or when he received a blow, should be put to torture in hell. The great sages have prescribed light penances for venial sins and severe expiation for serious transgressions, distinguishing between sins of different degrees. By these various modes of expiation—penance, the making of gifts, the doing of *japa*, and so on—the sins to which they refer are expiated, but not the impulse thereto, which is the secret spring of such sins, and which is the consequence of Adharma. That too is rooted out by worship offered to the feet of the Lord. The name of the illustrious Lord, uttered consciously or unwittingly, destroys a man's sin as surely as fire destroys a heap of wood; just as a powerful medicine has its effect, even if taken by chance by one who does not know its potency, so has the *mantra* (here, the Lord's name), when uttered even by the ignorant man' (14-19).

Srī Suka said: Having thus decided clearly the Dharma that governs the devotees of the Lord, they freed the Brahmana from the noose of the retainers of Yama and saved him from death. The messengers of Death, repulsed by them, went to their King, Yama, and told him all that had happened, O subduer of the foe. The Brahmana, released from the noose and no longer oppressed by fear, regained his normal state. Rejoicing at the sight of Vishnu's messengers, he bent his head low in reverence to them. Seeing that he wished to speak, the servants of Vishnu instantly vanished before his eyes, O flawless one (20-23).

Ajāmila, having heard the immaculate *Dharma* pertaining to the devotees of the Lord expounded by the messengers of Vishnu, and the *Dharmas* enjoined by the Vedas on men who are under the sway of the *guṇas*, expounded by the messengers of Yama, was forthwith filled with devotion to the Lord, from hearing of His greatness. And as he recalled his evil life, he was overcome by remorse. 'Alas, what a miserable fate I have brought upon myself from my failure to control the mind! I have destroyed my Brahmanahood, being reborn of this Sūdra woman (in the form of progeny). Fie on me, I have earned the censure of good men by doing evil and brought a blot on the fair name of my family by discarding my young and chaste wife and attaching myself to a drunken harlot. Alas, alas, ingrate that I am, I deserted at the same moment, as only a despicable creature could, my old and grieving parents, who were friendless and had no other relations to look after them. I shall without a doubt be thrown into that fearful hell where the rakes who violate *Dharma* suffer the tortures inflicted by Yama (24-29).

'Was that just a dream that I saw, or was it really a miracle? Where have they gone now, who caught me in their noose and dragged me? And where have those others gone, the four perfected ones of the winning looks, who released me when I was being led to the nether regions bound by the noose? Luckless as I am, I must have won some merit in former lives, to be vouchsafed sight of those high gods, which has brought my mind peace. Otherwise, how could my tongue—the tongue of an impure creature, the paramour of a Sūdra woman—manage to utter, when I was about to die, the name of the Lord of Vaikuntha, which grips the heart? What a far cry from me—a cheat and a wicked, shameless creature who ruined his Brahmanhood—to "Narayana", that ever-auspicious name of the exalted Lord! I shall, controlling the breath, the mind and the faculties of sense and action, strive in such a way that I shall not plunge my soul again in the intense darkness of the transmigratory life. Snapping the fetters imposed by ignorance and desire and activity, I shall cultivate loving concern for all things living, as well as tranquillity,

friendship and compassion, and resolutely free myself from the grip of the Lord's Māyā in the form of woman, who toyed with me, utterly base, as if I were her pet monkey. Aiming at the realization of the Supreme Truth, I shall cease to entertain such notions as "me" and "mine" towards the body and the like, and concentrate on the Lord a mind that has been purified by reciting His names, and in other ways.' (30-38).

Suka went on : When supreme aversion to the worldly life was thus wrought in him as the result of that momentary contact with the saintly, he severed all ties and betook himself to Gangādvāra (Haridwār). Staying in that sanctuary of the Lord, he practised yoga; turning his senses inward, he bent his mind on the *Ātman*. Detaching the mind from the body and the senses by concentration, he united it with the Brahma, the essence of the Lord, Which is the intuition of the Self. When his mind was thus securely lodged in the Brahma, the Brahmana saw before him the divine personages whom he recognised as those he had seen before, and he bowed low before them. Discarding his body the next moment in that holy spot on the Gangā, he instantly assumed a form which was similar to that of the personal attendants of the Lord. Along with the retainers of Vishnu, the Brahmana ascended in a golden aerial car, through the heavens, to the realm where the Lord of the Goddess Śrī abides. Thus that paramour of a Sūdra woman, who had violated all his duties and broken his vows, who had fallen from his high estate because of his offences and was about to be thrown into hell, was instantly released by uttering the name of the Lord. There is no more effective way of cutting at the root of sin, open to those who yearn for liberation, than singing the praises of Him Whose feet are holy, since the mind does not afterwards incline to *karma*; whereas it will remain tainted with *rajas* and *tamas* even after other modes of expiation are resorted to (39-46).

The man who hears with faith or recites with devotion this legend, which contains profound truths and is capable of dissipating sins, will never go to hell. The servants of Yama dare not even look at him; however wicked he might have been, he is exalted in the

world of Vishnu. Even Ajāmila reached that abode (of Vishnu) by uttering, when dying, the name of Hari, which his son happened to bear ; how much more surely, then, should he who utters it with faith ? (47-49).

CHAPTER III

YAMA PROCLAIMS VISHNU'S SUPREMACY

The King asked : ' What reply did Dharmarāja give to his own servants, who had been foiled by Murāri's messengers, when he, in the hollow of whose hands lies all the world, found that his orders had been nullified ? Such overruling of the authority of the god Yama is something unheard of. All the world is likely to be assailed by doubts and questionings in regard to this, which you alone can, I am perfectly certain, remove, O sage ' (1-2).

Srī Suka replied : When Yama's retainers were prevented by the Lord's followers from carrying out their purpose, they made this known to their master, the Lord of Samyamani. They asked him : ' How many are there, O Lord, who are set in authority over the world of living creatures who do actions of the three kinds, and deal out the fruits of their actions ? If there should be many such in the world, armed with the power to chastise, no one might know either joy or sorrow ; on the other hand no one might be exempt from either. No doubt there could be many magistrates because of the large numbers of those who perform actions ; but they cannot all be described as " rulers ", except by courtesy, any more than feudatory chiefs can be called kings. Therefore you alone are the overlord of all creatures and those set in authority over them ; you are their ruler, and you assess the good and evil they do and pass judgment accordingly. Nowhere in the world (up to now) has your decree been rendered infructuous ; but now your command has been overridden by four marvellous personages, who looked like Siddhas (perfected ones). By the use of superior force they released a sinner whom we were taking by your orders to the houses of torture, severing his bonds. We should like

to know who they are, if you deem it proper that we should. When the man called out "Narayana!" they appeared instantly, telling him, "Do not be afraid!" (3-10).

Srī Suka went on: Thus asked, the god Yama, subduer of all creatures, was pleased; and thinking of the lotus feet of Hari, he answered his servants. Yama said: 'It is not I, but another, That is the Overlord of all the worlds, stationary and moving; on Him the universe is extended as the cloth is on warp and woof. By those who are His fractions, the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds is accomplished. The world is controlled by Him, like the bull held by the nose-cord. It is He that tethers men to the (duties enjoined in the) Vedas by means of names (and forms) as cattle are tethered to the long cord by means of halters. And to Him all these, who are bound by the strong bonds of names and forms, pay tribute in fear and trembling. Myself, the great Indra, Nirṛti, Prachetas, Soma, Agni, Īśa, the wind-god, the sun-god, Brahmā, the Ādityas, the Viśvedevas, the Vasus, the Sādhyas, the hosts of the Maruts and the Rudras, the Siddhas and others, including the patriarchs and the rulers of the immortals, Bhṛgu and the rest, though we are untainted by *rajas* and *tamas* and are predominantly *sāttvic* in disposition, do not know His purposes, because we are all under the influence of Māyā; how then could others? Creatures burdened with a body cannot apprehend the Ātman, the Witness seated in the heart, with their minds, their organs of sensation and action, their *chitta* or their power of speech, any more than forms and colours perceived by the eye can perceive the eye, which sees them and is other than they. The messengers of Hari, the Overlord of the universe, the Transcendent and Ever-free, the Controller of Māyā, are active everywhere in the world. They are exceedingly charming, resembling as they do the Lord in their appearance, virtues and disposition. Vishnu's servants, who receive the homage of the gods, and whose marvellous forms none may easily behold, protect the men who are the devotees of the Lord from their enemies, from me, and from danger from every quarter (11-18).

‘Even the sages, the gods, and the chiefs of the Siddhas do not know the true inwardness of the Dharma which was given out by the Lord Himself; how then could Asuras, men, Vidyādhara, Chāraṇas and the like know anything about it? The Self-existent (Brahmā), Nārada, the Lord Sambhu, the sage Sanatkumāra, Kapila, Svāyambhuva Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali, the son of Vyāsa (Suka), and I—we twelve know the *Dharma* taught by the Lord and acceptable to Him, O retainers, a *Dharma* which is sacred, immaculate and difficult to know, but the knower of which wins immortality (liberation). The wise have laid down, as the *Dharma* that men should follow above all others, the cultivation of loving devotion to the Lord, through the recital of His names, and other such holy exercises. You can see how supremely effective the utterance of the Lord’s name can be, my children, from the fact that that alone sufficed to free Ajāmila from the noose of death. For the mere dissipation of their sins, it is unnecessary for men to recite the names, qualities and achievements of the Lord. For even Ajāmila, the sinner, won liberation, nothing less, by wailing aloud the word Narayana, when about to die, with his son in his mind (19-24).

‘Very few even among men of great learning have realized the truth of this. Being under the spell of the Lord’s Māyā, they are in love with the sweet-smelling flowers of the Veda (the eulogistic passages which exalt sacrifices and other ritual), and are therefore zealous in the performance of onerous and elaborate rites. Realizing this truth, wise men engage themselves whole-heartedly in cultivating loving devotion to the Lord Ananta. They do not merit punishment at my hands. If perchance they should sin, that sin is wiped out by their uttering the name of the Lord, Who is much sung. The praises of the saintly men who look upon all with an equal eye and who have trusted themselves into the hands of the Lord, are sung by the gods and the Siddhas. They are protected by the mace of Hari. You should not go anywhere near them. Neither we nor time itself has power to punish them. But bring here those wicked men who cling to the domestic life, which is the road to

hell, and turn their faces resolutely away from the honey of the lotus feet of Mukunda, which is constantly savoured by the community of the enlightened and discriminating souls who have given up all possessions and who can infallibly distinguish the supreme good. Bring here those worthless wretches whose tongue never speaks the virtues or the names of the Lord, whose mind never thinks of His lotus feet, whose head has never, not even once, bowed to Krishna, and who have never offered Vishnu worship. May the Primordial Lord Narayana forgive us our transgressions committed through our servants. Forbearance well becomes the Lord Who is supremely great, when we, His servants, who have erred in ignorance, beseech His forgiveness with folded hands. I offer my profound homage to the Lord Who is everywhere' (25-30).

Sri Suka said: Therefore, O son of the Kurus, you should know that the glorification of Vishnu is auspicious for the world and constitutes complete expiation for the most heinous of sins. The mind can never be so thoroughly purified by the observance of fasts and the like as it is by the loving devotion that is engendered in men who frequently hear or utter the praises of the tremendous exploits of Hari. He who, savouring the honey of the lotus feet of Krishna, has discarded the trivial and sinful pleasures that the senses crave for, can never again delight in them. But others, succumbing to desire, have recourse to the practice of rites to atone for their sins; and this must again involve them in sin (31-33).

The servants of Yama, hearing those words of their master, which spoke of the greatness of the Lord, no longer marvelled. Keeping them in mind, they have ever since been so afraid of those who take refuge in Achyuta that they dare not so much as look at them. This secret story was narrated by the blessed sage Kumbhasambhava (Agasthya) when he was living on the Malaya mountain and worshipping Hari (34-35).

CHAPTER IV

DAKSHA'S HYMN TO VISHNU

The King said : ' You have given a compendious account of the creation of gods, Asuras, men, serpents, beasts and birds in the Svâyambhuva Manvantara. I wish to hear a fuller account of that, blessed one, and also how the great Lord (Brahmā) effected the subsequent creation, and using what powers ' (1-2).

The Sūta said : That great yogi, the son of Bādarāyana, welcomed the pertinent question of the royal sage and answered as follows, O great sages. Śrī Sūka said : When the Prachetases, the ten sons of Prāchinabarhis, emerged from the waters of the sea, they beheld the earth covered with trees, and they were incensed against them. Their anger sharpened by the austerities they had practised, they breathed wind and fire from their mouths to burn them. Seeing the trees being burnt, the great King Soma (the moon-god) spoke to the Prachetases, O first of the Kurus, pacifying them. ' You, O fortunate ones, should not bear hostility to the poor trees ', he told them; ' you have been cast for the role of protectors of your subjects, and should be keen to make them prosper. It was the Overlord of the great progenitors, the infinite and omnipresent Lord Hari that created the trees, and herbage, to provide the food that nourishes, and other edibles. The non-moving are the food of the moving, the footless, of those that have feet, the handless of those that have hands, and the quadrupeds, of the bipeds. How could you, O sinless ones, who have been ordered by your father and the God of gods to beget progeny, burn up the trees ? Follow in the footsteps of the good, as your father, grandfather and great-grandfathers did, and restrain your fierce anger. Parents are the natural friends and protectors of their children, just as the eyelashes are of the eyes, the husband of his wife, the King of his subjects, the householder of the wandering mendicants, and the wise man, of the ignorant. Within the bodies of all creatures abides the suprême Lord Hari, as their Soul and Inner Ruler. You should look upon all that

is, as His abode ; doing that, you will please Him. The man who restrains by inquiry into the truth of the *Ātman* the fierce anger that suddenly surges in the heart, like a bolt from the blue, transcends the sway of the *guṇas*. Stop burning the poor trees ; may all be well with the remaining trees and yourselves. Receive as your bride this excellent maid whom the trees have brought up'. Pacifying them with these words, the King Soma gave them the beautiful daughter of the Apsaras, and departed. And they all married her without any violation of Dharma (3-16).

To them were born of her the well-known Daksha of the Prachetas clan, by whose progeny the three worlds were filled. Listen attentively while I tell you how Daksha, who loved his daughters, produced all creatures through his virility or by the exercise of his will. At first the Patriarch created only by taking thought, all this progeny of his—gods, Asuras, men and the rest—who live in the sky, in the water and on earth. But when his creation did not grow and multiply, he betook himself to the foothills of the Vindhya and practised rigorous austerities. Bathing thrice a day in the holy waters, called Aghamarshana, which free one from all sin, he propitiated Hari by his austerities. He extolled the exalted Lord Adhokshaja by reciting the 'Hamsa-guhya'. I shall now give you that hymn which inclined Hari in favour of Daksha (17-22).

The Patriarch said : ' I make my prostrations to the All-Highest, Whose power of intelligence is never frustrated, Who is the Controller of the *jīva* and of *Māyā*, Whose essential form cannot be apprehended by those who regard the products of the *guṇas* as real, Who baffles the understanding, but is Self-luminous. I make my prostrations to the Supreme Lord, the Friend, living with Whom in the same body, the *jīva*, His companion, does not know the service that He, the Witness, does for him, even as the objective world cannot see the senses that serve to manifest it. I offer my praises to the Omniscient, Infinite Lord Whom the *jīva* does not know, though he knows the body, the vital airs, the senses, the powers of the inner organs, and the elements, gross and subtle—none of which knows either itself or any

of the others, or any one other than these—and he also knows the *guṇas*. Salutations to Him, the Immaculate One, Who manifests Himself in the pure mind as essential Self-Consciousness, when the mind that cognizes name and form is stilled with the cessation of perception and recollection. May He vouchsafe His grace to me—He, the Lord Who is discovered by wise men, exercising their power of discrimination, as present in the heart, but hidden by His own nine powers, which are of the nature of the three *guṇas* (as well as by their sixteen modifications), even as the priests uncover and kindle the fire implicit in the wood by reciting the fifteen “*Sāmidheni*” *mantras*. May He Who is experienced as the bliss of liberation, when *Māyā*, the source of all difference, is negated, and yet answers to all names and has the universe for His form, and Whose innate power (*Māyā*) baffles definition, be gracious to Me ! I make my salutations to Him Who is not to be identified with whatever may be expressed by words or determined by the intellect, grasped by the senses or even purposed by the mind, since all these are the forms that the *guṇas* take, while His existence may be only inferred from the appearance and disappearance of the products of the *guṇas*. I make my salutations to that Brahma Which is the free agent as well as the passive instrument, the object, the place, the cause, the means, the beneficiary and the conferrer of the benefit of any action ; for It was before aught else came into existence, and It is the First Cause from Which derive the primary and the secondary causes of creation ; and It is the One without a second, and unique. I make my salutations to Him of the endless attributes, Whose powers provide a fertile ground for debate, leaving those who argue about it and about, confused and perplexed. I make my salutations to the Brahma, Which is common ground between the *Sāstra* that teaches the way of Devotion and the *Sāstra* that expounds the Way of Knowledge ; for these, though making different and contrary predications, have both the same Brahma in mind, Which provides the basis for the contentions of both, while transcending both. May the Transcendent and Infinite Lord, Who though devoid of name and form, took to

Himself names and forms, and was born into this world, and performed exploits with a view to blessing those who worshipped His feet, be gracious to Me. May the Supreme Lord be pleased to fulfil my wish—He, the Inner Ruler in all beings, Who is identified by men, according to their latent tendencies and inclinations, with this or that other deity which is the object of worship of any of the latter-day modes of worship, even as the wind, carrying different substances, though all of them (such as the smells of different flowers or the colour of dust) partake of the character of the earth, seems to be different in each case' (23-34).

Sri Suka said: When he thus extolled Him on the shore of the Aghamarshaṇa, O best of the Kurus, the exalted Lord, Who loves His devotees, appeared before the panegyrist. He rode on the shoulders of Suparṇa, displaying eight long and mighty arms. He carried the discus, the conch-shell, the sword and the shield, bow and arrow, the noose and the mace. He was clad in yellow silks, and was dark as the rain-cloud. His face was serene and His eyes shed grace. The garland of forest flowers reached down to His feet, and He shone with the Śrīvatsa mark and the Kausthubha jewel. He wore a great crown and bracelets and sparkling ear-pendants, and was adorned with girdle, rings, bangles, anklets and armlets. The Lord of the three worlds, Who had assumed that form, ravished the hearts of all beings by His beauty. He was surrounded by Nārada, Nanda and other attendants and the Guardians of the worlds, while Siddhas, Gandharvas and Chāraṇas followed Him, singing His praises (35-39).

On seeing that marvellous form, the Patriarch rejoiced, all his fears fallen from him, and he made his prostrations, throwing himself down on the ground like a stick. His mind and senses flooded with intense joy, as the rivers are swollen by torrential cascades, he could find no words to express it. As the Patriarch, His devotee, who desired progeny, thus bent low before Him, Janārdana, Who sees into the hearts of all creatures, spoke to him. The Lord said: 'O fortunate son of Prachetas, your austerities have found their due fulfilment in the supreme devotion to Me which your earnest

faith has brought you. I am pleased with you, O Patriarch, for practising austerities with a view to making creation flourish. It is My desire that all beings should be prosperous. Brahmā, Bhava, you, the patriarchs, the Manus and the great gods, are all My fractions, who are instrumental in making all creatures flourish. Yogic contemplation, O Brahman, is the heart of Me ; the practice of *mantra japa* is My body ; the conceptual image that is formed preliminary to contemplation, is the form that body assumes. The sacrifices that are flawlessly performed are My limbs ; the "Apūrva", the fruit of the sacrifice, is My mind ; and the gods are My vital airs. Before creation started, I alone was, and I merely existed ; there was nothing else which could be regarded as subject or object. I existed as pure consciousness and was so totally unmanifest as to seem to be asleep. When the cosmic egg, the product of the *guṇas*, was projected by Māyā on Me, the Infinite Lord possessed of numberless attributes, then the First of the Progenitors (Brahmā), appeared in it. When he, the great god, infused with My potency, was resolved on launching the work of creation but felt diffident, I told him to practise austerities, and he undertook rigorous austerities ; by which the powerful one was able to create the nine patriarchs, including yourself, to begin with. This Asiknī, here, my dear, is the daughter of the Patriarch Panchajana. Take her to wife, O patriarch. Finding lawful pleasure in sexual union with her, you shall beget on her a vast progeny. After you all creatures shall reproduce themselves in their children by mating with the other sex, thanks to the operation of My Māyā, and render Me service.' Śrī Suka said : Having said this, Hari, Who prospers the world, disappeared on the spot, like wealth which one gets in a dream (40-54).

CHAPTER V

NĀRADA INSTRUCTS DAKSHA'S SONS

Srī Suka said : The great Patriarch, infused with the power of Vishnu's Māyā, begot on Panchajani ten thousand sons known as the Haryaśvas. Those sons of Daksha, who were all of the same disposition, were desired by their father to beget offspring ; and they proceeded west, O King, to the very big and holy lake, Nārāyaṇasaras, at the confluence of the Sindhu and the sea, which was frequented by the sages and the Siddhas. Their hearts were freed from impurities by merely bathing in it ; and they were inclined to take to the life of the supreme renouncers. But they engaged in rigorous austerities in obedience to their father's commands. The celestial sage Nārada saw them, who were intent on the multiplication of the earth's population. And he told them, ' O Haryaśvas, how could you, who are rulers of men, be so foolish as to think of offspring without having first seen the end of the earth, the realm where there is only one person, or the cave with no exit, the woman with a myriad forms, the man who is the paramour of a harlot, the river that flows both ways, the marvellous habitation built of twenty-five materials, the swan that lives somewhere and speaks of marvellous things, or the independently revolving structure which is sharp and strong as if built of razors and thunderbolts ? And, without realizing the true significance of the commands of your omniscient father, which it is most befitting that you should follow, how could you engage in the propagation of progeny ? ' (1-9).

Srī Suka said : Hearing what he said, and using their natural intelligence, the Haryaśvas examined the enigmatic words of the celestial sage to discover his real meaning, and interpreted them as follows. ' Earth ' stands for the *kshetra*, the subtle body known as the *jīva*, which is the cause of bondage from all eternity of the *Ātman*. If one cannot see to its destruction, what use would *karmas* be, which cannot bring liberation ? The exalted and supreme Lord is One only. He is the Causeless Cause of the universe, and beyond the three states, of

which He is the independent Witness, and freedom is His eternal condition. What use can *karma* be to a man who has not realized Him, and who does not dedicate all his works to Him? To the man who does not see in this life the Light within (the Self-effulgent Brahma), having reached Which one does not return (to this world), any more than the man who has gone to the blissful world of Pātāla, of what value can those *karmas* be, which promise trivial joys? The mind, under the influence of the *guṇas*, is as restless and changeful in its pursuit of pleasure as a harlot. Unless he has attained that power of discrimination which puts an end to its sway, how can it profit him to do actions which can bring him no peace? To the *jīva* who does not realize his fall from his true state by his attachment to the mind, and who reaps the fruit of following its promptings, like the man who has an unchaste wife, what use can *karmas* done from lack of discriminating judgment be? To the heedless man who is buffeted by Māyā, which is furiously active in the body, creating and destroying, like the river agitated by contrary currents near the harbour where it falls into the sea, and does not realize his predicament, what use can *karmas* be, which he does under her prompting? The Lord (Purusha) is the Inner Ruler of the twenty-five *tattvas*, and their marvellous support. What use would *karmas* done from illusory notions of his own freedom of action be to the man who does not know Him, Who is the Controller of the complex of cause and effect? If a man neglects the study of the Sāstra that posits the supreme Lord, distinguishes between matter and spirit, and shows the nature of bondage and liberation, and thus remains ignorant of those things, what will it avail him to do *karmas* which aim at worldly gains? To the man who does not see the perpetually revolving wheel of time, which operates unimpeded, and with its razor edge continually hacks at the world, what use could *karmas* prompted by desire be? How will the man, who does not know that the Sāstra, his omniscient father in the spirit, teaches that only *karmas* favourable to withdrawal from the world should be done, and who has faith in the worldly life, and is eagerly involved in its material

concerns, be able to follow the course that promotes withdrawal from the world?' (10-20).

The Haryaśvas, agreeing unanimously with this conclusion, went round him (Nārada) in all reverence and took to the path from which there is no returning. And the sage resumed his world-wanderings, his mind wholly given to the lotus feet of the Lord realized as the Brahma manifest in music. The patriarch was supremely unhappy when he heard that his well-conducted sons were lost to him because of Nārada, and he greatly grieved. To father good sons is to ask for sorrow. Pacified by Aja, he again begot on Panchajanī a thousand sons, who were called the Sabalāśvas. They too, commanded by their father to beget offspring took vows, and went to the Nārāyaṇa-saras where their elder brothers had found fulfilment. Their minds cleansed of all impurities by a mere bath in it, they practised great austerities there, muttering the *Pranava*. Living on water for some months and then on air, they worshipped the Lord Vishnu and continuously recited the following *mantra* :

'OM, Salutations to Narayana, Inner Ruler and Almighty Lord, Who is Immaculate Perfection, Who abides in the purified heart.'

The sage Nārada approached those too, who were intent on the propagation of progeny and, as before, spoke to them in enigmatic language. He told them, 'O sons of Daksha, listen to my advice. You, who love your brothers, should see that you follow in their footsteps. The man who, knowing Dharma, follows the noble path taken by his brothers, has an unfailing friend in the religious merit that he thus gains and will enjoy happiness in the company of the gods.' Having said this, Nārada of the unfailing insight went his way; and, O noble one, they followed the path their brothers had taken, the right path that leads to the Brahma, by turning their minds inward. And they came back no more than the nights that are gone (21-33).

The Patriarch, having seen many baleful portents about this time, heard of Nārada's having defeated once more the purpose with which his sons had set out.

Beside himself with grief for his sons, he raged against Nārada. On seeing the celestial sage, he spoke to him, his lips trembling in anger. Daksha said: 'Ah, evil one, parading as a saint, you have done harm to my children; you taught the mendicant's way of life to those who were vowed to do their duty. You, wicked creature, have ruined the hopes of happiness here and blessedness hereafter, of those who have not discharged the three debts and have not investigated into the true nature of *karma*. Unsettling the minds of the young without the least pity, and bringing Hari's name into disrepute, you show yourself shamelessly among His attendants as one of them. Without a doubt, all devotees of the Lord are eager to promote the happiness of every creature—all, that is, except you, who spoil friendship and have shown yourself inimical to those who bore you no ill-will. Men do not get disillusioned with the world by what a pseudo-ascetic like you, without true knowledge, does (to unsettle their minds). You seem to think that the bonds of attachment can be snapped by the cultivation of mere passivity. No man who has not had direct experience of pleasure will know how pleasure ends in pain; and the disillusionment that comes with such knowledge (and produces cessation of desire and the consequent detachment) can never be known by him who renounces under the instigation of another. We bore with you, though you did a grievous disservice to us, who live the peaceable life of the householder and devote ourselves to the discharge of our duties. But since you have wronged us a second time and sought to destroy our prospects of progeny, you shall never know rest, O fool, but shall be always a wanderer over the worlds without a fixed abode' (34-43).

Srī Suka said: Nārada, who enjoys the esteem of all good folk, acquiesced, saying, 'Very good, let it be so!' Such is the nature of the saint; who, though he could meet curse with curse, forbears (44).

CHAPTER VI

DAKSHA'S DAUGHTERS

Sri Suka said: Then the son of the Prachetases (Daksha), pacified and persuaded by Brahmā, begot on Asiknī sixty daughters who loved their father. He gave away in marriage ten of them to Dharma, thirteen to Kaśyapa, twenty-seven to the moon-god, two each to Bhūta, Angiras and Kṛśāśva and the rest to Tārکشya (Kaśyapa, who was known by this other name also). I will tell you their names and the names of their children whose descendants came to fill the three worlds. Dharma's wives were Bhānu, Lambā, Kakub, Jāmi, Viśvā, Sādhyā, Marutvatī, Vasu, Muhūrtā, and Sankalpā. And now about their sons. Bhānu's son was Devarshabha, and Indrasena was his son, O King. Lambā gave birth to Vidyota, who begot the deities presiding over clouds. Sankata was the son of Kakub, and his son was Kikata, to whom were born the gods who preside over fortified cities. Jāmi's son was Svarga, to whom was born Nandi. The Viśvedevas were born of Viśvā; they are said to be childless. The group known as the Sādhyas were born to Sādhyā; Arthasiddhi was their son. Marutvān and Jayanta were born of Marutvatī. Jayanta was a partial incarnation of Vāsudeva, who was known as Upendra. The gods known as the Mauhūrtikas (those who preside over *muhūrtas*) were born of Muhūrtā; it is these that bring to all creatures the fruits due to them at the various times over which they preside. Sankalpā gave birth to Sankalpa, and he begot Kāma. The eight Vasus were the sons of Vasu; let me tell you their names. They were Droṇa, Prāṇa, Dhruva, Arka, Agni, Dosha, Vasu and Vibhāvasu. Of Abhimatī, the wife of Droṇa, were born Harsha, Soka, Bhaya and the rest. Prāṇa's wife was Ūjasvatī, and his sons Saha, Āyus and Purojava. Dhruva's wife was Dharāṇi, and she gave birth to the tutelar deities of different cities. Arka's wife was Vāsanā; Tarsha and others were his sons. The wife of Agni was Vasordhārā, and his sons by her were Draviṇaka and others. Skanda was his (Agni's) son by the Kṛttikās; and to him were born

Viśākha and others. Sarvarī was the wife of Dosha, and his son was Siśumāra, a digit of the Lord Hari. Viśvakarmā, the architect of the gods, was the son of Vasu and Āngirasī. To him was born Chākshusha Manu of Ākṛti. The Viśvedevas and the Sādhyas were that Manu's sons. Ushā bore to Vibhāvasu three sons, Vyushta, Rochis and Ātapa; to the last was born Panchayāma (the deity presiding over daytime) because of whom all creatures go forth to their labour by day. Sarūpā, the wife of Bhūta, gave birth to the Rudras, who are reckoned in hundreds of millions. Rudra, who took eleven principal forms, known as Raivata, Aja, Bhava, Bhīma, Vāma, Ugra, Vṛshākapi, Ajaikapāt, Ahirbudhnya, Bahurūpa and Mahān, had for his attendants the spirits of the dead, the elementals and contrivers of obstacles, who were born of the other wife of Bhūta (1-18).

The Patriarch Angiras had two wives Svadhā and Satī. Svadhā was the mother of the manes, and Satī, of the Veda known as Atharva-Angiras. Kṛśāśva begot Dhūmra-keśa on his wife Archis, and Vedaśīras, Devala, Vayuna, and Manu, on his wife Dhishaṇā. Tārکشya had four wives Vinatā, Kadrū, Patangī, and Yāminī. Patangī gave birth to the birds, and Yāminī to the locusts. Suparṇā (Vinatā) gave birth to Garuda, the mount of the Lord of the Sacrifice Himself, and Aruṇa, the charioteer of the sun-god. Kadrū gave birth to serpents in great numbers. The deities presiding over the constellations Kṛttikā and the rest, were the wives of the moon-god, O son of the Bharatas. But, because of Daksha's curse, he was attacked by consumption and had no issue by any one of them. Though he succeeded in placating him, the moon-god got only digits, which wane in the black fortnight (19-24).

And now, you shall hear the auspicious names of the mothers of the worlds, the wives of Kaśyapa, who filled the worlds with their progeny. They were Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kāsthā, Arishtā, Surasā, Ilā, Muni, Krodhavaśā, Tāmrā, Surabhi, Saramā, and Timi. To Timi were born the creatures that live in water. Wild animals were born of Saramā; buffaloes and cows and all other cloven-hooved animals, were born of Surabhi; kites, vultures, and so on, were born of Tāmrā, and the

bands of Apsarases were born of Muni. The reptiles such as snakes were the progeny of Krodhavaśā, O King. All trees were brought forth by Ilā, while Surasā was the mother of all the Rākshasas. The Gandharvas were born of Arishtā, and animals other than the cloven-hooved were the progeny of Kāshthā (25-29).

Danu had sixty-one sons ; you shall hear the names of the principal ones. They were Dvimūrdhā, Sambara, Arishta, Hayagrīva, Vibhāvasu, Ayomukha, Sankuśiras, Svarbhānu, Kapila, Aruṇa, Pulomā, Vṛshaparvā, Eka-chakra, Anutāpana, Dhūmrakeśa, Virūpāksha, Viprachitti and Durjaya. Namuchi, as is well known, married Suprabhā, Svarbhānu's daughter. Yayāti, the powerful son of Nahusha, married Sarmishthā, the daughter of Vṛshaparvā. Vaiśvānara (Danu's son) had four beautiful daughters, known as Upadānavī, Hayaśiras, Pulomā, and Kālakā. Hiranyaksha wedded Upadānavī, O King, and Kratu Hayaśiras. The Patriarch, the blessed Kaśyapa, married the two other daughters of Vaiśvānara, Pulomā and Kālakā, at the instance of Brahmā. Their sons were the Paulomās and Kālakeyas, warlike Dānavas, who were sixty thousand in number (and were known as Nivātakavachas). Knowing that they were destroyers of sacrifices, your grandfather, when he was in heaven, slew them single-handed, O King, from the desire to please Indra. Viprachitti begot one hundred and one sons on Simhikā, of whom Rāhu was the eldest, the others being the hundred Ketus. Rahu attained the status of a planet (30-37).

And now you shall hear of Aditi's descendants in due order, among whom was born the Almighty Lord Narayana with a fraction of Himself. Vivasvān, Aryamā, Pūshan, Tvashtā, Savitā, Bhaga, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Varuṇa, Mitra, Śakra, and Urukrama were Aditi's sons. Samjñā bore to Vivasvān a son, Srāddhadeva, who became a Manu ; and the fortunate woman also bore him the twins, the god Yama and Yamī. And she herself, then taking the form of a mare on earth, bore him the Aśvin twins. Chāyā, the wife of Vivasvān, brought forth Sanaiśchara and then the Manu Sāvarṇi, as well as a daughter Tapatī, who chose Samvaraṇa for her husband. Mātṛkā was the wife of Aryamā, and to them were born

the Charshaṇīs (those who are endowed with the knowledge of *karma* and *moksha*); among whom Brahmā placed the race of men. Pūshan, who subsisted on offerings of dough, having had his teeth knocked out, when he siding with Daksha laughed at the enraged Hara, was without issue. A younger sister of the Daityas, the maiden named Rachanā, married Tvashtā. They had two sons Sanniveśa and the powerful Viśvarūpa. The hosts of the gods chose the latter as their preceptor, though he was a nephew of their enemies, when they were abandoned by their Guru Āngiras (Bṛhaspati), whom they had insulted (38-45).

CHAPTER VII

INDRA FORFEITS HIS KINGDOM

The King asked : Why did their preceptor leave the gods ? Please tell me, blessed one: of what trespass against their Guru were they guilty ? (1).

Srī Suka replied : Indra, waxing proud of his empire over the three worlds, fell away from the path of rectitude. Surrounded by the Maruts, Vasus, Rudras, Ādityas, Rbhus, Viśvedevas, Sādhyas and the Aśvin twins, and attended by the Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Gandharvas, who extolled him, the sages, who recited the Vedas, the Vidyādhara and Apsarases, who sang his praises, and the Kinnaras, Patagas and Uragas, he was once sitting on his throne in the audience hall, sharing it with Poulomī (his queen Sachī), his splendour proclaimed by the white umbrella, lovely as the full moon, and other insignia of imperial pomp such as the fan and the fly-whisk. When the chief preceptor of the gods and of himself came in, he did not welcome him by rising to receive him, offering him a seat and showing him other marks of respect. Even after he had seen 'the Lord of Speech', the great sage whom gods and Asuras alike revered, enter the hall, Indra did not so much as stir from his seat. Recognizing the deterioration of his character brought about by the arrogance that goes with opulence, the great seer, the son of Angiras, who could have punished him had he cared, left the hall instantly

and went home, saying nothing. Only then did Indra realize that he had shown disrespect to his Guru, and he blamed himself openly in the assembly. 'Alas, fool that I was, I, blinded by power, have done a grievous wrong in insulting my Guru in the assembly. Who, if he were sensible, would aspire even to the affluence of the lord of heaven, which has made me, though I am the ruler of the gods, behave like the Asuras? Those who say that he who occupies the throne of supreme sovereignty should not rise up to receive anybody, do not know the highest *dharma*. People who heed the evil counsel of such men, who are themselves sure to fall into the darkest hell, will be submerged, like those who trust themselves to floats of stone. So I shall touch his feet with my head and strive in all sincerity to placate the preceptor of the gods, the Brahmana of unplumbed wisdom.' But while Maghavā was forming this resolution, the blessed sage Bṛhaspati left his home for a destination which was kept secret by his extraordinary *yogic* power. The great ruler of heaven could not discover by the most diligent enquiry his Guru's whereabouts. And as he pondered (on the probable consequences), he had no peace of mind, though he had the gods with him (2-17).

The moment they heard of what had happened, the arrogant Asuras, acting on the advice of Uśanas, started an armed conflict with the gods. The latter, their heads, thighs and arms cleft by the sharp arrows of the Asuras, went with Indra to wait upon Brahmā. Hanging down their heads in shame, they threw themselves on His mercy. Seeing their distress, the Lord Who was self-created, not born of woman, was moved to pity, and He spoke to them words of comfort. Brahmā said 'Alas, great gods, what a pity that you should have done a monstrous wrong, from the arrogant consciousness of power, in failing to show due respect to the Brahmana who is established in the knowledge of the Brahma and has controlled his senses. That disgraceful conduct of yours is directly responsible for the defeat that you, for all your affluence, have had to suffer at the hands of enemies who had sunk into insignificance. You now see, O Maghavā, how your foes, who had grown weak

by their transgression against their Guru, have become prosperous again by propitiating Kāvya (Sukra). With such devotion to him, they might even capture my place! How much easier, then, it should be for them, who are the disciples of the Bhṛgu and who can keep their secrets, to take heaven. No evil can befall Kings who look upon Govinda, the Brahmana and the cow as their friends and protectors. Go quick, then, and seek the help of Viśvarūpa, Tvashtā's son, the Brahmana who is given to austerities and has won control over his senses. If you accord him due respect and treat him well, he will enable you to gain your objects, provided you quietly put up with whatever he might do' (18-25).

Srī Suka said : The gods, freed from anxiety by what Brahmā told them, approached the sage, the son of Tvashtā, and embracing him, spoke to him as follows. The gods said : ' We are come as guests to your hermitage, and wish you all that is good. You should grant us what we, your kinsmen, need just now, son. You know that the first duty of good sons is to serve their father, even if they should have sons of their own ; much more so, if they are celibates. The preceptor is the Veda incarnate. The father is the embodiment of the great Progenitor (Brahmā), and the elder brother, of the ruler of the gods. The mother is the very incarnation of the goddess of earth. The sister is tenderness itself. The stranger at the gate who comes as a guest should be regarded as the embodiment of Dharma, while the friendly visitor is to be respected like the fire-god himself. And all creatures should be looked upon as one's own self. Therefore, son, you should do our wish and put an end to the anguish of your kinsmen, caused by defeat at the hands of the enemy, by the power of your austerities. We invite you, O Brahmana established in the knowledge of the Brahma, to be our Guru, so that we shall easily overcome our rivals, aided by your Brāhmic lustre. Prostrating oneself at the feet of a man younger in age, with a view to promoting one's purpose, is not blameworthy. Besides, age confers the seniority that commands respect only when the younger man does not possess knowledge of the Veda' (26-33).

Srī Suka said : Thus besought by the gods to accept the position of Chief Priest, Viśvarūpa agreed, being pleased ; and he answered them in engaging words. Viśvarūpa said : ' The occupation of a priest is looked down upon by men of righteous disposition, and it is calculated to diminish one's Brāhmic lustre. But how can the likes of me refuse, my masters, to do what you, the rulers of the worlds, ask of me, whom you have the right to look upon as your pupil ? The pupil's true good lies in not turning down such a request. Men who have no possessions glean ears of corn fallen in the fields or pick up trifles dropped in the streets of shops. That is all the wealth they have. But with that they, as householders, dispense hospitality to good men. How can I do the degraded work of a priest, though stupid men might rejoice in it ? Still, I shall not say " No " to the request of my elders. After all how little it is that you ask ! I shall do whatever you want me to do, with all the resources at my command, even if it cost me my life' (34-37).

Srī Suka said : Having thus promised them, Viśvarūpa, that man of immense austerities, functioned as their chosen priest with all diligence. Though the prosperity of the enemies of the gods was safeguarded by the secret lore of Uśanas, the capable man wrested it from them by means of the *mantra* dedicated to Vishnu and gave it to Mahendra. The sagacious man taught that *mantra* to Mahendra, and the powerful Sahasrāksha defeated the Asura hosts under its protection (38-40).

CHAPTER VIII

THE 'NĀRĀYANA-KAVACHA' MANTRA

The King prayed, ' Please teach me, O blessed one, the *mantra* called *Nārāyana-kavacha*, under whose protection the Lord of the thousand eyes vanquished in battle the foe armed with deadly weapons and put them and their mounts to rout, just child's-play to him, and enjoyed the overlordship of the three worlds (1-2).

Srī Suka said : Having been chosen by Mahendra as his Chief Priest, the son of Tvashtā communicated to him at his request the *mantra*, *Nārāyaṇa-kavacha*. Listen attentively while I tell you what he said. Viśvarūpa said : 'The man who faces peril should, washing his hands and feet, performing *āchamana* and purifying himself, sit down facing north, wearing a ring of *kūśa* grass, and do "nyāsa" with the two *mantras*¹ on his different limbs and on his hands, and protect himself with the armour that is the *Nārāyaṇa-kavacha*. On the feet, the knees, the thighs, the belly, the heart and the chest, the mouth and the head, he should, in that order, place his fingers, with the utterance of each syllable, prefaced and followed by the *Pranava*, of the *mantra*, "Om Namō Nārāyaṇāya"; or he may do it in the reverse order, beginning with the head. He should then do *Kara-nyāsa*, touching the fingers and phalanges of the thumbs in due order, uttering the syllables of the twelve-syllabled *mantra*, beginning with the *Pranava*, and ending with the syllable "ya", the utterance of each syllable being begun and ended with the *Pranava*. Then he should do *nyāsa* with the six-syllabled *Om Vishnave Namaḥ*, touching the heart with the uttering of the *Pranava*, the crown of the head with the uttering of the syllable "vi", the junction of the eyebrows with "sha", the hair on the head with "ṇa", the eyes with "ve", and all the joints with "na". And then, by meditating on the syllable "ma" as a weapon with which he would repel the Asuras, the sagacious man will be securing within himself the presence of the deity who presides over the *mantra*. Using the last syllable *ma*, with the "visarga", he should utter the formula, "*Mah asthrāya phat*", and should project that weapon in all the directions (3-10).

He should identify himself mentally with the Supreme Lord, the object of contemplation, Who possesses the six divine attributes, and meditate on Him as the embodiment of knowledge, power and austerities. And doing that, he should recite the following *mantra* : "Om, May Hari afford me all protection—He Whose lotus feet are placed on the back of the King of the birds, Who possesses the eight supernatural

¹ *Om Namō Nārāyaṇāya* and *Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*.

powers and eight arms, and carries the conch and the discus, the sword and the shield, the mace, the bow and the arrow, and the noose. May the Lord Who took the form of the Fish protect me in the waters from the monsters of the deep, which are the noose of Varuṇa. On land may the Lord Who took the form of the neophyte Vāmana of His own free will, protect me; and may the Lord Who with his three strides covered the entire universe protect me in the upper air. May the All-powerful Lord Narasimha, the Foe of the embattled Asura hosts, whose titanic laughter reverberated in the ten directions and caused miscarriage to pregnant women, save me in critical states, as when I find myself lost in the wilderness or have to face the enemy in the van of battle. May the Great Boar, Who is pictured as having the sacrifices for limbs, and Who lifted up the earth with His tusk, protect me from the perils of the way. May Paraśurāma protect me on the tops of mountains, and Rama, the elder brother of Bharata, along with Lakshmana, take care of me when I am far away from home. May Narayana save me from the mischief of black magic, and from negligence on my own part in regard to enjoined duties. May Nara save me from pride. May Dattātreya, the Teacher of yoga, save me from falling away from yoga, and Kapila, the master-yogi and Controller of the *guṇas*, from the bondage of *karma*. May Sanatkumāra save me from the power of the god of love, and Hayagrīva from the offence of failing in due respect to the gods as a wayfarer. May the foremost of the celestial sages (Nārada) save me from the faults of omission and commission in the worship of the Supreme Lord. And May Hari, Who was incarnate as the tortoise, save me from all sins that must lead to hell. May the blessed Dhanvantari save me from the consequences of eating unwholesome food, and R̥shabha, Who had subdued the mind, from fear of the pairs of opposites. May Yajna (Vishnu) protect me from slander, Balabhadra from popular violence and (Sesha) the King of the serpents, from the serpents known as "Krodhavaśas". May the blessed Dvaipāyana save me from benighted ignorance, and Buddha from the error of heresy. May Kalki,

Who was the Lord's magnificent incarnation for the safeguarding of Dharma, protect me from the taint of Kali, the dregs of time. May Keśava protect me with His mace at daybreak, Govinda with the flute in the second watch of the day, Narayana, with His upraised javelin in the forenoon, and Vishnu at noon-time, armed with the supreme discus. May the Lord Who was the Slayer of Madhu protect me in the afternoon with His fierce bow and Mādhava, Who is the Trinity of Gods, in the last watch of the day. In the early night hours, may Hrshikeśa protect me, and both in the second watch of the night and at midnight may Padmanābha take care of me. In the later part of the night, may the Lord with the Śrīvatsa mark protect me, and in the early hours before dawn, the Lord Janārdana armed with the sword. May Dāmodara protect me at dawn, and the Lord Viśveśvara, Who stands forth as time, protect me in the twilight hour both morning and evening (11-19).

‘O discus, with your edge cutting sharp like the conflagration at the dissolution of the worlds, as you whirl everywhere speeded by the Lord's arm, burn up the army of the foe, as the fire aided by the wind burns up dry grass. O mace, your sparks fall like thunder, and you are the beloved of the Invincible Lord; smash to smithereens the Kūshmāndas and other evil spirits who cause obstacles, the Yakshas and Rākshasas, demons and goblins, and pulverize my enemies. And you, O prince of conches, blown by the mouth of Krishna, make the heart of my enemy quake, and scatter with your awful din the Rākshasas, Pramathas, spirits of the dead, mother-spirits, and Brahma-rākshasas with frightful eyes. Employed by the hand of the Lord, cut to pieces the forces of the foe, O best of swords, with your fierce edge. O buckler carrying the image of a hundred moons, blot out the view of the wicked foe and blind them who have the evil eye. May all evil that threatens us, whether in the form of evil spirits, comets, bad men, reptiles, fanged animals, or our own sins—all those powers, in fact, that are adverse to the realization of our wishes—be destroyed instantly as the result of the mention of Thy names, Thy forms and

weapons, O Lord. May the all-powerful Lord Garuda, who is praised in the Sāma chants and who is the embodiment of the Veda, save me in every crisis, and the Lord Vishvakṣena protect me by His names from every peril. May the Lord Hari's names and forms, mounts and weapons and His chief retainers protect our intellect, faculties, mind and life. As sure as the Lord Himself is the universe of the embodied and the formless, all our sufferings shall be destroyed. The exalted and omniscient Lord Hari, Who is seen as free from all difference by those who meditate on Him as identical with their own Self, shows by His own free choice (to those whose minds entertain the sense of difference) His ornaments and weapons, the different forms and names He takes, and the many powers He possesses. By the same token, may He, Who is all-pervading, protect us at all times and everywhere in one or other of His many forms. May the Lord Narasimha, Who eclipses the power of every creature by His splendour, protect us from all dangers that might assail us, whether from the quarters or the intermediate points, from above or below, or from anywhere round about, from inside or outside (20-34).

'I have imparted to you, O Maghāva, this *Nārāyaṇa-kavacha*, protected by which, as by armour, you shall easily vanquish the Asura hosts. Even the man who is looked at or touched with his foot by one who practises this *mantra*, shall be freed from fear. Nowhere and at no time shall the man who has mastered this *Vidyā* have cause to fear any danger, from kings or from robbers, evil spirits, tigers or others. A certain Brahmana of the Kauśika *gotra*, who practised this *Vidyā*, discarded his mortal frame in a desert by *yogic* concentration. Chitraratha, ruler of the Gandharvas, once happened to fly in his aerial car with his women-folk over the place where the Brahmana's body lay. Instantly he crashed down to the ground, falling headlong with his car. Greatly wondering, he collected the bones on the advice of the Vālakhilyas and threw them into the waters of the Sarasvatī where it flows east, bathed and went home' (35-40).

Srī Suka said : He who hears this recited or himself

devoutly recites it in times of peril receives the prostrations of all creatures and is freed from every peril. Having learnt this *Vidyā* from Viśvarūpa, Satakratu vanquished the Asuras in battle and enjoyed the lordship of the three worlds (41-42).

CHAPTER IX

INDRA SLAYS HIS NEW GURU

Srī Suka said : It is said, O scion of the Bharatas, that Viśvarūpa had three heads ; with one of these he drank *soma*, and with another spirituous liquor, while with the third he ate food. As his fathers were among the gods, he offered them oblations in the fire openly and called on them loudly and in all humility to receive them. But, while worshipping the gods thus, he contrived to convey offerings in secret to the Asuras, under the powerful influence of his love for his mother. The King of the gods, observing this insult to the gods and his hypocritical practice of Dharma, was frightened, and in his rage he cut off his heads instantly. The head with which he drank *soma* became the blackcock, the head with which he drank liquor became the common sparrow, and the head with which he ate food became the partridge (1-5).

With folded hands he (Indra) accepted (the sin of) Brahmana-murder, though he could have repudiated it. At the end of a year, Indra, wishing to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the world, divided the sin equally between the earth, water, trees and women. The earth received a fourth part in return for the promise that pits and hollows in it shall be filled up in due course by the operation of natural causes. In the earth, the sin of Brahmana-murder takes the form of barren soil. The trees received a quarter, being promised that if any part of them were lopped off they should grow again. In them the sin of Brahmana-murder shows itself in the form of oozing resins. Women received a quarter, being promised that pregnancy shall not be a bar to making love. Their sin is seen in them in the form of

monthly menstrual discharges. The waters received a fourth part of the sin, being promised that they shall flow perennially. The man who takes water for his use throws away the foam and bubbles that may be found in it, as they represent the sin of Brahmanamurder (6-11).

When his son was slain, Tvashtā made oblations in the fire, for the raising of a foe who should slay Indra, with the words, 'Grow apace, O enemy of Indra, and slay the foe without delay'. Thereupon there rose from the Dakshināgni one who was of a terrible aspect, like Death, the destroyer at the time of the dissolution of the worlds. He grew in all directions at once, filling out every day to the extent of an arrow's flight. He was black as a burnt hill, and he gave out a glare like a bank of clouds lit up by the setting sun. His hair and beard were like molten copper, and his looks fierce as the midday sun. He danced and yelled, shaking the earth with his tread, his blazing trident upraised, as if he had impaled the sky on it. He yawned again and again, opening wide his cavernous mouth with its massive tusks, and seemed to drink up the sky, lick the stars with his tongue and devour the three worlds. On seeing him, all creatures fled in every direction in their terrible fright. The darkness which, taking the form of the son of Tvashtā, enveloped the worlds, came to be known as the wicked and cruel Vṛtra (12-18).

The great gods, followed by their forces, advanced against and assailed him with their multitudinous celestial weapons and missiles; but he swallowed up all of them. They, who were in great consternation at finding their prowess dimmed, offered the following prayer with collected minds to the Primordial Lord, the Inner Ruler. 'May we be vouchsafed protection by Him Who is dreaded by all-destroying time—which is death, and of which the three worlds formed out of air, *ākāśa*, fire, water and earth, their Rulers, Brahmā and others, and we, the gods, go in dread—and to Whom we pay tribute. Foolish, indeed, like the man who wishes to cross the sea catching hold of a dog's tail, is he who seeks succour from any one other than the Lord Who is free from egotism, and is serenely established

in the Bliss of the Self, finding all satisfaction in it, Who is untouched by limitation or difference. The Lord incarnate as the Fish, to Whose mighty horn Manu bound fast his great ship, the earth, and thus passed unscathed through his travail, will assuredly save us, who have taken refuge in Him, from the formidable menace that is Tvashtā's son. May that same Lord ferry us over the sea of troubles, Who, in the far past, rescued Svayambhū, when He found himself all alone, fallen from the world-lotus into the ocean at the time of the Great Dissolution, which was frightful with its roaring billows driven by raging winds. He, the all-powerful Lord, Who of His own free will created us by His Power, and by Whose grace we create the worlds, but of Whom we are oblivious in our conceit that we are independent, though He has been here long before us, and it is He that prompts all our doings (as the Ruler within us) ; Who, in *yuga* after *yuga*, protects us, making our cause His own, when we are persecuted by our enemies, by taking birth again and again of His own indefeasible will as a god or a sage, as one of the lower creation or as a man,—in Him, Who is our own Soul and our God, of Whose substance the universe is made, but Who is different from it, Who is the Cause of its existence, being both Pradhāna and Purusha, we take refuge. He will look after His own' (19-27).

Srī Suka said : As the gods thus praised Him, O King, the Lord, carrying the conch, the discus and the mace, appeared before them on the shore of the western sea. On seeing Him, with eyes like the full-blown autumn lotus, waited upon by His sixteen personal attendants, who all resembled Him except that they did not have the Srīvatsa mark or the Kausthubha jewel, they were transported with joy, and they threw themselves down on the ground before Him, O King, and then, slowly rising up, extolled Him. The gods said : 'Salutations to Thee from Whom the sacrifice derives its power, and Who standest forth as time (which puts an end to the enjoyment of the fruit of the sacrifice). Salutations to Thee That wieldest the discus (against those who ruin the sacrifice), and art known by many an auspicious name. No one, O Creator, who is a pro-

duct of the latter-day creation, can presume to know Thy transcendent state beyond the three worlds, the product of the three *guṇas*, Whose Controller Thou art (28-32).

Om : * Salutations to Thee, O exalted Lord Narayana That art Vāsudeva, the First Cause, the Almighty Lord, the Home of all greatness, and all auspiciousness, the Source of all blessings, and supremely compassionate ; That art the One without a second and sole Support of the universe and its undisputed Master ; That art paramount over all Powers, and the Spouse of Lakshmi. Thou, O Lord, art intuited as the Bliss of the Self by the ascetic renouncers in their own souls when the ignorance that is like the door shut upon the mind is removed by the power of devotion to the Lord, which shines brightly, purified by the concentration won through the assiduous practice of yoga. Our minds are baffled by the pastime, in which Thou engagest, without a body, without any support, and without looking to us for a united effort, in creating, protecting and destroying by Thine own power the world constituted of the *guṇas* ; while Thou Thyself remainest unconditioned by the *guṇas* and untouched by change. Besides we do not know whether even Thou (the Brahma) might not (as the *jīva*) be caught up in the body formed by the *guṇas*, and helplessly reap the consequences of past *karma*, like any common man who reaps in this life the fruits of his own past deeds ; or whether Thou remainest aloof and unconcerned (as a mere Witness), with Thy unfailing power of intelligence, delighting in the Self and remaining uninvolved in activity. Both these propositions might be affirmed, without contradiction, of Thee, the Supreme Lord, ever-free, Whose virtues baffle all reckoning, Whose greatness is immeasurable, Who art beyond the reach and grasp of the intellects of perverse disputants, whose minds are muddled by Sāstras relying on spurious proofs and indulging in fanciful hypotheses, arguments and conclusions. For, while Thou art the One without a second, in Whom is totally

* The passages translated in this and the following two paragraphs are in prose.

negated the *samsāra* that is the product of Māyā, what is there that cannot be predicated of Thee that commandest Māyā? But in truth there is no contradiction in Thee, because there is no duality. Thou seemest different to different men, according as they see with clear insight or with minds confused and bewildered; even as a piece of rope is simple rope to some, while others, who have snake on the brain, see a snake in it. He (Who thus appears as a multitude of entities) is the One Reality behind every phenomenal appearance. He is the Supreme Lord, from Whom spring all the causes that bring the world into existence. And, being the Inner Ruler in all *jīvas*, His presence is known from the manifestation of all objects by the senses and other faculties. And He alone remains when all else has been negated. Thy great devotees, O Madhusūdana, who have given themselves wholly to Thee, and whose memory of the trivial enjoyments derived from objects seen or heard has been wiped out quite by the joy constantly welling up in their hearts as a consequence of having once tasted a drop from the ocean of nectar That is Thy glory, are supremely happy in their intense and uninterrupted enjoyment of Thee, the exalted Lord, the beloved Friend and the Soul in all creatures. How could the good men, who know how to achieve the highest goal, and who have in Thee their Best Beloved and Well-wisher, cease from devoted service to Thy lotus feet, having attained which there is no more wandering for them in the maze of *samsāra*? (33-39).

‘O Lord That art the Soul and the Abode of the three worlds, which Thou bestridest, ruling and delighting them with Thy glorious pastimes, the progeny of Diti and Danu too are manifestations of Thy puissance. But in the past, whenever Thou in Thy wisdom wert sure that that was not the time for them to assert their dominance, Thou, as chastiser of the erring, didst punish them according to their transgressions, incarnating Thyself (for the purpose) by Thy own power of Māyā, as god or man, or half-man half-beast, or amphibian. Likewise Thou mayest slay, if Thou deemest fit, this son of Tvashtā, O Lord. We, Thy devotees, make our prostrations to Thee, O Lord, our Father and the

Grandsire of the worlds; we grapple Thee to our souls with hoops of steel, constantly meditating on Thy lotus feet. And Thou hast annexed us to Thyself by revealing Thyself to us in this glorious form. Pray allay now our sufferings with a gracious and loving smile and a glance from those eyes, pure and cool and pleasant as the zephyr, and with kind words that are like drops of nectar. O Lord, how could we presume to enlighten Thee, any more than sparks can bring light to fire, in regard to the desires we cherish, since Thou delightest in the use of Thy divine power of *Māyā* as the efficient cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds? Thou knowest, too, all creatures from within as the Brahma and the Ruler dwelling in their hearts, and from without as the *Pradhāna* (the material cause of their bodies) and therefore with direct knowledge of the circumstances—time, place and organic disposition—by which they are conditioned. And Thou art, again, the Enlightener of all their faculties of cognition and the Witness of their activities; for Thou art in Thy essence the Brahma unlimited by adjuncts and the *Paramātman* (Whose essence is pure *sattva*), and art therefore aloof and unattached like *ākāśa* (40-42).

‘Therefore, O Lord, Thou shouldst Thyself effect the purposes in furtherance of which we have sought the shade of Thy lotus feet, O Father and Mentor, which allay the pangs of existence with its endless travails. And please, O Lord, slay without delay the son of *Tvashtā*, who would gobble up the three worlds, and who, O Krishna, has already eclipsed our power and rendered nugatory our weapons, celestial and other. We make our salutations to Thee, O Hari, Immaculate Lord, Witness in the cave of the heart, Whose nature is bliss eternal, whose fame endears Him to all creatures, Who knows no beginning, Who is the Refuge of the saintly, the Goal of the wanderer in the maze of *samsāra*, and his prized fruit when he arrives there’ (43-45).

Sri Suka said: Thus extolled in glowing terms by the gods, Hari, Who was propitiated by that hymn of praise, spoke to them. Hari said: ‘I am pleased with you, great gods, because of the knowledge that you

have displayed, and your hymn of praise, which should serve to remind men of the puissance of the Ātman, and induce devotion to Me. What is there that may not be attained if one should propitiate Me? But he who, having realized the truth of truths, is devoted wholly to Me, wants nothing but Me, O best of celestials. The ignorant man who looks upon objects of enjoyment as real does not know his true good. He who grants him those enjoyments which he longs for, would be equally ignorant. The wise man who knows what is the true good does not teach the way of works to the ignorant; the able physician does not give the ailing man unwholesome food because he asks for it (46-50).

‘Go, O Maghavā, to Dadyang, the great sage, and all shall be well with you. Beg of him without delay to give you his body, which has been hardened by the mastery of secret lores, observance of vows and austerities. Dadyang gained the knowledge of the unconditioned Brahma, which, having been imparted by Hayagrīva, was known as the *Aśva-siras*; and he taught it to the Aśvins and thus conferred upon them the status of immortals. It was this Dadyang of the Atharvanas who gave Tvashtā that invulnerable armour (the *Nārāyaṇa-kavacha*), which is of My essence and which Tvashtā gave to his son (Viśvarūpa), who taught it to you. He, because he knows Dharma, will give his bones to you, if you, and the Aśvins especially, beg them of him. Get Viśvakarmā to forge out of them a mighty weapon with which you shall cut off the head of Vṛttra, your arm strengthened by My power. When Vṛttra has been slain, you will regain your power, your weapons, celestial and other, and your opulence. All will be well with you, for none can harm those who are devoted to Me’ (51-55).

CHAPTER X

INDRA OBTAINS THE THUNDERBOLT

Sri Suka said: Having thus instructed Indra, the exalted Lord Hari, the Protector of the worlds, instantly vanished from view even as the gods were looking.

The great sage of the Atharvaṇas heard with delight the request the gods made. But he replied, as though laughing at them, O son of the Bharatas, 'Do you not know, O gods, the intolerable agony resulting in loss of consciousness that death can cause to living beings? The body is the dearest thing that men who cling to life cherish in this world. Who could bear to part with it even to Vishnu, should He beg for it?' (1-4).

The gods answered him saying, 'What indeed is there that great men like you, who have compassion for other creatures and whose actions merit the praises of those whose fame is holy, will not give up, O Brahman? True enough, he who is devoted to his self-interest does not know others' difficulties. If he knew, he would not ask, nor will he who can give say "No"' (5-6).

The sage replied, 'I refused, because I wished to hear the Dharma expounded by you. For your sake I shall give up this body which, though I love it, will be leaving me some day. The man who will not earn Dharma, or fame, by giving up this ephemeral body, O gods, out of compassion for living beings, is one whose existence even inanimate things must deplore. This is the eternal law to which men of sacred renown cling—that a man should rejoice with those who rejoice and grieve with those who grieve. Alas for the pusillanimity of the mortal who will not help those in need, with such transient possessions as one's own body, wealth and children, and which will be appropriated by others in due course, and are intrinsically worthless' (7-10).

Srī Suka said: Having thus resolved, Dadyang of the Atharvaṇas, united his own soul with the Exalted Lord, the Supreme Brahma, and discarded his body. With his senses, life-breath, mind and intellect under control, he, who had penetrated to the truth behind appearances, snapped all bonds, and being absorbed in *samādhi*, did not know when life departed from the body (11-12).

Then Indra, armed with the thunderbolt fashioned by Viśvakarmā from the bones of the sage, was filled with uncommon strength, being endowed with the power of the Lord. Riding on the great elephant

(Airāvata), with all the companies of the gods about him, and the sages praising him, he dazzled all eyes, and put heart into the three worlds. With the impetuous onset of Rudra pouncing upon Death, he, in his wrath attacked Vṛttra, who was surrounded by the captains of the Asura forces, to cut him down. Then began the great and bloody battle of the gods and the Asuras on the banks of the Narmadā in the first four-yuga cycle (of the Vaivasvata Manvantara), at the beginning of the Tretā-yuga. The sight of the Ruler of the gods on the battle-field, armed with the thunderbolt and glowing with splendour, amidst the Rudras, Vasus and Ādityas, the Aśvin twins, the manes and the fire-gods, the Maruts, the Ṛbhus, the Sādhyas and Viśvedevas, provoked Vṛttra and the Asuras who followed him beyond bearing, O King. Namuchi, Sambara, Anarvā, Dvimūrdhā, Rshabha, Ambara, Hayagrīva, Sanku-śiras, Viprachitti, Ayomukha, Pulomā, Vṛshaparvā, Praheti, Heti and Kāla, and other sons of Diti and Danu, Yakshas and Rākshasas in their thousands, adorned with gold, and led by Sumāli and Māli, stemmed the advance of the van of Indra's army, which even Death might have found unapproachable, and with cool self-possession harried it, letting off loud war-whoops in their overweening pride. With maces, iron clubs and arrows, with darts, hammers, javelins, spears, hatchets and swords, with *śataghnīs* and *bhūṣundīs* and other weapons, celestial and physical, they assailed the gods on all sides. These were hidden from view by the arrows that fell upon them thick and fast from every direction, shaft following close upon shaft, like stars in the sky screened by the clouds. But that flood of weapons did not reach the armed forces of the gods, being shivered to bits in the air by the gods who were swift of arm (in aim). When their stock of weapons, celestial and other, was exhausted, they showered on the army of the gods mountain peaks, trees and rocks; but the gods cut these too to pieces. When the followers of Vṛttra found the forces of Indra unscathed and free from danger, without a single wound from all that multitude of weapons, trees, stones and mountain peaks, they knew a great fear (13-27).

All the efforts made by the Daityas repeatedly against the celestial hosts, whom Krishna favoured, were wholly futile, like harsh and wounding words spoken by the mean-minded against the great. On finding that all their efforts were in vain, the Asuras, who were lacking in devotion to Hari, and had had the lust of battle knocked out of them, and their courage sapped, prepared to desert their master in the front-line of battle and run away. The intrepid warrior Vr̥ttra, seeing those Asura followers of his taking to their heels, and his forces vanquished and put to rout, laughed. He, who excelled by his undaunted spirit, addressed to them words that were called for by the occasion and that appealed to men of mettle. 'O Viprachitti, Namuchi, Pulomā, O Maya, Anarvā and Sambara, hear what I say. The mortal born must die in every case, and no way has been found to prevent this. If death brings fame and heaven, who would not welcome it when it comes? There are two ways in which one may go to one's death, both of which are approved by the Sāstra, though neither is easy of accomplishment. The man who is established in yoga may control the breath and cast off the body, concentrating his mind on the Brahma. And the leader of fighting men, who would rather fall in the battle-field facing the foe than flee from it, may lie on the hero's bed' (28-33).

CHAPTER XI

VR̥TTRA'S DEVOTION TO VISHNU

Srī Suka said: But they, demoralized by fear, and resolved upon flight, would not listen to their master, who pointed out their duty to them, O King. The great Chief of the Asuras, the foe of Indra, grieved to see the Asura army scattering, driven hither and thither, like sheep without a shepherd, by the gods whom time favoured. Provoked to wrath by the intolerable sight, he held up the attack by main force, and his words were full of menace as he told the gods, 'What do you gain by pursuing these, their dams' dung, who decamp, beaten on the back? Those who preen themselves on

their heroism will not enhance their reputation or gain heaven by killing the craven. You curse, if you are really keen on fighting, or have guts in you, and are not after slothful ease, face me for a moment and see.' Intimidating the celestial forces with such threats and the sight of his enormous body, the enraged Asura of the tremendous strength let off a mighty yell that stunned the worlds. On hearing that loud roar of Vṛtra, the forces of the gods fell down in a swoon, like men struck by lightning. Filled with the lust of battle, he with his spear raised aloft shook the earth with his tread as he stamped on the army of the gods, which lay on the battle-field with closed eyes in abject misery, like the mad tusker trampling down a thicket of reeds. The Wielder of the thunderbolt, incensed by the sight, let fly his great mace at the foe as he came on. Irresistible as it was, he (Vṛtra) caught it carelessly with his left hand as it came. And in a great rage Indra's foe advanced with fierce strides and struck Mahendra's mount on the head with that mace, as he uttered a piercing yell on the battle-field; everybody applauded that feat of his, O King. Airāvata reeled under the blow from Vṛtra's mace like a mountain struck by lightning. Vomiting blood from its mangled mouth, the distressed beast retreated to a distance of seven bow-lengths with Indra on its back. The magnanimous warrior did not aim the mace again at the foe whose mount had sunk down and who was himself despondent. Then Indra healed his wounded mount with a touch of his hand from which flows nectar, and made a stand again. Seeing his foe and the slayer of his brother armed with the thunderbolt and ready to fight, he (Vṛtra) recalled with grief that cruel and sinful deed of his. His mind dazed by the recollection, he addressed Indra with a laugh (1-13).

Vṛtra said: 'Ah, how lucky that you, my foe, should now stand before me, you who are guilty of Brahmana-murder, the murder of your Guru and my brother. Thanks be to the gods that this very day I shall be able to discharge my debt by splitting your heart, hard as a stone, with my spear, O vilest of creatures! Desiring to gain heaven, you pitilessly cut

off with your sword, as the sacrificer does the head of the sacrificial victim, the heads of my elder brother, one who had realized the Self, who was a Brahmana and your Guru, and who was guilty of no offence, and was under vows, after inducing him to put his trust in you. Vultures shall feed at leisure on your carcass, as there will be no fire to burn it when you die a horrible death, mangled by my spear. Devoid of modesty, grace, pity or renown, you did a deed of infamy, for which even cannibals will execrate you. And if any of these followers of yours are foolish enough to attack me with their weapons in support of a wicked creature like you, I shall cut their throats with my sharp spear and offer them as sacrifice to the lords of the elementals and their followers. If on the other hand you should cut off my head with the thunderbolt, O valiant Indra, by employing superior force, I shall attain the world of heroes, having given up my body as food for the birds and the beasts and freed myself from the bondage of *karma*. O Ruler of the gods, why do you not launch the unfailing thunderbolt when I, your foe, stand before you? You need have no fear that the thunderbolt will fail as the mace failed, fruitless like the favour sought of a miser. This thunderbolt of yours, as you know, O Sakra, is sharpened by the power of Hari and the austerities of Dadichi. Therefore, kill your enemy under Vishnu's prompting. With him who has Hari on his side abide victory, prosperity and all auspicious qualities. Meditating on the lotus feet of Sankarshana as He taught me, I shall attain the Goal of the contemplative, discarding the body, the bonds of worldly enjoyments severed for me by the terrific force of your thunderbolt. He does not confer on his devotees, who love Him with all their hearts, those riches that are to be found in heaven, on earth or in the nether regions, because they breed hatred, fear, mental pain, lust, strife, sorrow and wearisome toil. Our Lord decrees the failure, O Sakra, of those labours of His own people which are directed towards the realization of the three ends of life. It is from the failure of such efforts that His favour should be inferred, a favour which is bes-

towed only on him who has given up all desires, not on others (14-23).

‘May I, O Hari, become, once again, the willing slave of those devotees of Thine who seek Thy feet as their sole refuge ! May my mind dwell on Thy virtues, O Lord of my heart, my tongue utter Thy praises, my body do Thy work. Separated from Thee, O Treasure-house of all auspicious traits, I would not want translation to Dhruva’s abode or to the world of Brahmā, empire over all mankind or sovereignty over the worlds below, mastery of *yogic* powers or even release from birth and death. I long for Thee, O Lotus-eyed, as unfledged chicks for the mother, or tethered and hungry calves for the udder, or the loving wife who droops, thinking of the loved one who is far away from home. May I find delight only in the company of Thy devotees, O illustrious Lord, though I may wander again in the maze of *samsāra* thanks to my own deeds, and not cling to children, wife and home, as I have done, because of Thy power of *Māyā*’ (24-27).

CHAPTER XII

VR̥TTRA’S DEATH

The sage Suka said : Being thus prepared to cast off his body on the battle-field, preferring death to victory, he (Vṛttra) grasped his spear and rushed upon the ruler of the gods, O King, as Kaitabha had advanced on the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu) in the waters of the Deluge. The great chief of the Asuras swiftly whirled his spear, with its sharp point blazing like the flame of the conflagration at the world’s dissolution, and launched it against Mahendra with a mighty yell, crying in his wrath, ‘Dead you are, you devil’. Looking at it unperturbed as it came along the sky, spinning and dazzling the eye with its baleful splendour like a planet or a meteor, Indra cut it down with the thunderbolt of the hundred joints and severed at the same time his arm, which resembled the body of the king of the serpents (Vāsuki). With one arm gone, Vṛttra grasped his iron club with his other hand, and

advanced in a tumult of fury on Indra, who was armed with the thunderbolt, and struck him on the jaw, and then hit the celestial elephant; and the thunderbolt dropped from the hand of Maghavā. Seeing that marvellous exploit of Vṛttra, the gods, the Asuras and the companies of the Chāraṇas and the Siddhas applauded him; while they cried out in dismay at Indra's desperate plight. Indra was too ashamed to pick up the thunderbolt which had fallen from his hand in the presence of the enemy. Vṛttra told him, 'Take up the thunderbolt and despatch your enemy, O Indra; this is no time for despondency. Victory will not always be to those fighters on the battle-field who look upon the body as the soul. Victory invariably attends only on the One Lord Who rules over the worlds, creating, preserving and sustaining them, Who is Omniscient, Primordial and Eternal. It is the Lord, in Whose hands are the worlds and their Guardians, and Whom they helplessly obey like birds caught in the net of the fowler, That gives victory or withholds it. Not knowing that the Lord, in the form of vital energy, mental and physical strength, death and immortality, is the cause, men wrongly imagine that the body, which is inert, is the cause. Know, O Maghavā, that all creatures are manipulated by the Supreme Lord like the wooden doll made in the likeness of a woman, or a mechanical toy deer. Without His grace Purusha, Prakṛti, Mahat, the ego, the elements, the organs of sense and action and the mind would be unable to enter on such activities as the creation of the worlds. He who does not know this looks upon himself as independent, while in truth he is not. It is the Lord That creates creatures through other creatures even as He destroys them. Men obtain at the appropriate time the blessings they seek, such as length of life, opulence, fame and power; while the reverse of blessings will be their lot if the time is not propitious, however much they might dislike it. Therefore one should preserve one's equanimity in good and evil repute, victory and defeat, happiness and misery, death and life. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are qualities that belong to Prakṛti, not to the soul; he who knows that the soul is only the

Witness never falls into bondage. Look at me, O Sakra, vanquished in battle, my weapon smashed, my arm cut off, and yet striving my best to take your life. Battle is a game of chance in which the stakes are the lives of men, arrows the dice, and the mounts of the fighters are the dice-board. No one knows whose will be victory here, whose defeat' (1-17).

Srī Suka said: Hearing Vṛttra's sincere speech, Indra honoured him. He was no longer surprised (at his magnanimity). Picking up the thunderbolt, he addressed him with a smile. Indra said: 'Blest you are, O Dānava, in having won fulfilment, since your mind has attained this state and you are devoted with your whole heart to the Lord Who is the Soul, the Friend and the Master of the worlds. You have passed beyond the sway of that Māyā of Vishnu which confounds all the worlds, for you have totally got over your *āsuric* nature and have been transformed into a person of the most exalted type. How wonderful that you, *rājasic* by temperament, should have cultivated unswerving devotion to the Lord Vāsudeva, Who is of the essence of *sattva*! Since you, with your devotion to Hari, the Supreme Lord, Who dispenses liberation, disport in the sea of nectar, what use can you have for those petty pleasures which are like ditch water?' (18-22).

Srī Suka went on: Thus exchanging high thoughts on what constitutes true Dharma, Indra and Vṛttra, both of them of extraordinary prowess and leaders of warriors, fought on, O King. Vṛttra, subduer of the foe, whirled the dread iron club grasped in his left hand and hurled it at Indra, O best of kings. The god sheared at one stroke, with the thunderbolt of the hundred joints, both Vṛttra's arm, which looked like the elephant's trunk, and the club. The Asura, with the blood flowing from the base of the arms where they had been severed, looked like a mountain that had fallen from the sky, its wings cut off by the Wielder of the thunderbolt. The Daitya opened his mouth, which was deep as the empyrean, so wide that the lower jaw touched the earth while the upper reached up to the heavens. With his tongue poisonous as the viper's and his tusks recalling death, he seemed intent on gobbling up the

three worlds, as he with his huge and lofty frame advanced swiftly like a walking mountain, shaking the mountains and shivering the earth with his tread. Possessed of immense strength and prowess, he pounced upon the Wielder of the thunderbolt and swallowed him up along with his mount, like a huge python devouring an elephant. Seeing him swallowed up by Vṛtra, the gods, the patriarchs and the great sages cried in despair, 'Alas, alas, we are undone !' But though he was devoured by the great Asurā chief, and went down into his belly, he did not die, being protected by the armour in the form of the *Nārāyaṇa-kavacha*, and his own *yogic* and magical powers. Cutting his way out from the belly with the thunderbolt, the all-powerful Indra severed by superior force the head of the foe as if it were a mountain-peak. The thunderbolt, whirling rapidly, and cutting his neck from all sides, severed it, taking as many days to do that as make up the period of the sun's transit through the zodiac (three hundred and sixty days) and hurled down the head at the hour appointed for the decapitation of Vṛtra (23-33).

Thereupon kettle-drums sounded in the sky, and the Gandharvas, Siddhas and the company of the great sages extolled him with the Vedic *mantras* which celebrate the prowess of the slayer of Vṛtra, and joyously showered flowers on him. The luminous soul of Vṛtra, emerging from his body, merged in the Lord Who transcends the worlds, as all the world was looking, O subduer of the foe (34-35).

CHAPTER XIII

INDRA'S EXPIATION

Srī Suka said : When Vṛtra had been slain, all the three worlds and their Guardians, except Sakra, were care-free and happy, O lordly giver. And the gods, sages, manes and spirits, the Daityas and the followers of the gods departed to their abodes¹, and so did Brahmā, Īśa, Indra and others (1-2).

¹ S. takes 'swayam' in the text to imply that they had all gone without taking leave of Indra.

The King said, 'I should like to know the cause of Indra's unhappiness, O sage. How could Indra be made unhappy by what brought happiness to the gods?' (3).

Srī Suka replied: The gods and the sages, frightened by Vṛtra's mounting prowess, had begged Indra to slay him, but he did not want to do that, being afraid of the consequences of slaying a Brahmana. Indra told them, 'The sin of slaughtering Viśvarūpa was shared graciously by women, the earth, water and the trees. How shall I purge myself of the sin of slaying Vṛtra?' The sages told him reassuringly, 'We shall conduct for you the horse sacrifice, and all will be well with you, don't you fear. If you offered the horse sacrifice for the propitiation of God Narayana, the Supreme Lord, Who is, too, the Dweller in the cave of the heart and the Paramātmā, you would be freed, even if you had destroyed the whole world. By merely uttering His name, even the man who is guilty of the sin of murdering a Brahmana, his own father, a cow, his mother or his preceptor, likewise he who eats dog's flesh, or who is a born Pulkasa—all these are purified. Propitiating Him by offering with zeal and faith the horse sacrifice which we shall conduct for you, you would not be saddled with sin, even if you had destroyed the entire world of the moving and the non-moving, as well as all Brahmanas; where then does the question of sin arise in killing a wicked creature?' (4-9).

Srī Suka said: Thus urged by the Brahmanas, Marutvān had slain the foe. When he was slain, the sin of Brahmana-murder sought out Vṛshākapi. Because of that sin, Indra had to suffer greatly, and he had no peace of mind. He who is ashamed of what he has done, drawing the world's censure upon himself, will have no comfort from his virtues, however great. He saw the sin pursue him in the form of a Chandāla woman suffering from consumption. Her frame trembling with age, she, clad in a blood-covered garment, came after him with dishevelled grey hair, fouling the air with the stench of her breath, which smelt of fish, and calling out to him to stop. He of the thousand eyes fled in every direction, then up into the

sky, and ultimately plunged into the Mānasa lake in the North-east, O King. He lived in the fibre inside a lotus stalk, without enjoyments of any kind, since he lived in the water, while fire was his purveyor. He lived thus for a thousand years unknown to others, wondering how he was to free himself from the sin of Brahmana-murder. In that period Nahusha, who had achieved greatness by learning and the strength won by austerities and yoga, ruled in heaven. But his intelligence was clouded by opulence, sovereign power and pride, and he was hurled down into the lowest of births, on account of Indra's spouse (10-17).

Then Indra, summoned by the Brahmanas' invocations, went (to heaven), freed from his sin by meditation on the Lord Who is the Support of Truth. Even before that, his sin, having been docked of its virulence by (Rudra) the God Who presides over that direction (North-east), did not overwhelm him; and he was also protected by Vishnu's Spouse. The Brahmarshis met him and made him take vows, O scion of the Bharatas, for the offering of a horse sacrifice for the propitiation of the Almighty Lord. When those well-versed in the Veda conducted the horse-sacrifice by which Mahendra propitiated the Lord in Whom are all the gods, the sin of slaying the son of Tvashtā, though formidable, was rendered nugatory by the Lord Himself, as mist is dispelled by the sun, O King. Thus, having worshipped the Primordial Lord of the Sacrifice by offering the horse sacrifice conducted for him by Marīchi and others according to the rules, Indra became great again, purified of his sin (18-21).

This great story should serve to rid one of all sins. It glorifies Him Whose feet purify, it is calculated to enhance devotion; and it describes the greatness of His devotees, the absolution of Mahendra, and his victory. Wise men will read it again and again, or at least hear it recited on all holy days; by doing so they will gain wealth, fame, long life, the vigorous functioning of all faculties, release from all sins, victory over foes, and every other blessing (22-23).

CHAPTER XIV

THE LEGEND OF CHITRAKETU

Parikshit asked : ' How did the sinful Vṛtra, whose nature was dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*, come to have such rooted faith in Narayana, O Brahman ? Even the gods, who are of a wholly *sāttvic* nature, and the sages, whose hearts are pure, do not as a rule display devotion to the feet of Mukunda. As numerous as particles of dust are the creatures who people this world ; of them but a handful of men and others devote themselves to Dharma. Among them, very few indeed are those who long for liberation, O best of Brahmanas. And among these again, but one or two is freed from the bondage of attachment and realizes the truth. But even among millions of self-realized men, it would be difficult to find one who was devoted to Narayana and had attained serenity. How then could the wicked Vṛtra, who oppressed all the worlds, and who acquitted himself in war to the admiration of Indra, be thus firmly devoted to Krishna even while a terrible battle was raging ? This is what intrigues me greatly, O sage, and I should be glad to be enlightened ' (1-7).

The Sūta said : The blessed son of Bādarāyaṇa was pleased to hear this very pertinent question of the attentive Parikshit, and answered him thus. Śrī Suka said : Listen attentively, O King, while I tell you the story as heard from the mouth of Dvaipāyana, Nārada and Devala. In the Sūrasena country ruled the emperor Chitraketu, whose realm yielded all that one could wish for. He had ten million wives ; but though he was capable of having children, he had no children of them, O King. Though he had beauty, generosity, youth, noble birth, learning, imperial power and opulence, he was beset by care at finding himself the husband of barren women. Neither his manifold affluence, nor his beautiful queens, nor his empire over the earth brought him any satisfaction. It so chanced that the blessed sage Angiras, in the course of his world-peregrinations, came to his house once. Duly honouring him by going forth to meet him, and offering him the

customary presents, he entertained him to hospitality; and when he was seated comfortably, sat down by his side with a collected mind. The great sage praised him, who sat down on the bare ground in all humility, and spoke to him kindly, great King. Angiras said: 'I trust excellent health and prosperity attend you and your subjects. As the *jīva* is ever attended and safeguarded by the seven modifications of Prakṛti,¹ so should the King be by the seven constituents of a kingdom. The King who rules in accordance with the will of his people obtains all blessings; and so do the subjects who rely on him to look after them and their possessions. Are your spouses, subjects, ministers and servants, the heads of guilds, counsellors, citizens, people of the countryside, feudatory chiefs and sons submissive to your will? All these obey him who has control over himself, and to him all the worlds and their rulers pay tribute with all diligence. But you do not seem to be satisfied with yourself. It seems to me, looking at your face, wan with care, that you have not obtained your heart's desire, either by your own efforts or through those of others' (8-21).

Thus speculatively probed by the sage, who however knew what was weighing on his mind, O King, he, who desired a son, replied with his head bowed in humility. Chitraketu said: 'What is there, O blessed one, that the yogis, whose sins have all been swept away by austerities, knowledge and contemplation, cannot find out for themselves in regard to the external or internal state of any man? Still, since you ask, though you know, I shall tell you with your permission, O Brahman, what troubles my mind, because you command it. Though enjoying such imperial power and opulence as might be coveted even by the Guardians of the worlds, I cannot rejoice, because I have no children, even as the man who suffers from hunger and thirst will not be content with anything else but food and drink. Therefore, O blessed one, save me and my ancestors from falling into hell. Let me by your grace have progeny, so that we may escape that fate' (22-26).

Śrī Suka said: Thus begged, the compassionate

¹ Mahat, Ahaṁkāra and the five elements,

sage, the son of Brahmā, prepared a sacrificial offering for the propitiation of Tvashtā, and sacrificed to him. The eldest and best of the King's consorts was known as Kṛtadyuti, and the Brahmana gave her the sanctified remnants of the oblations, O scion of the Bharatas. And the son of Brahmā went away, telling the King, 'You will have one son, O King, and he will bring you both joy and grief.' And the lady Kṛtadyuti, having partaken of the offerings, came to bear the seed of Chitraketu in her womb, even as the goddess Kṛttikā had borne the son of the fire-god. The child in her womb, having the virility of the King of the Sūrasenas, steadily grew like the phase of the moon in the bright fortnight, O King. And at the proper time a male child was born, bringing joy to all the people of the Sūrasena country who came to know of it (27-32).

The rejoicing king took his bath, and being thus purified, adorned himself, and got the Brahmanas to pronounce blessings and to perform the *jātakarma* rite. And he gifted to them gold and silver, raiment, ornaments, villages, horses, elephants and sixty million milch-cows. And to others too the generous man gave all that they sought, even as Parjanya (the rain-god) sends down the rains that men pray for, so that the child might have wealth, fame and length of life (33-35).

The love of the father, the sage-king, for the son whom he had obtained with such great difficulty, grew every day like the pauper's love for wealth that he had earned with infinite pains. The mother's love for her son, exceeding all bounds, seemed almost like infatuation. The co-wives of Kṛtadyuti were thrown into a fever of desire for progeny. And Chitraketu, fondling his son all the time, felt an extraordinary affection for the wife who had given him a son, such as none of his other wives knew. They grieved intensely because of their childlessness and the King's indifference towards them, and reviled themselves, envying their rival. 'Shameful is the lot of the woman who for her sins has been denied children. The husband does not give her the consideration and regard due to one's spouse and helpmeet, while her co-wives blest with children despise her as if she were a servant. Even the servant

who enjoys the constant esteem of her master, who appreciates her services, has no cause for unhappiness. But we are like the servant of a servant in being singularly unfortunate' (36-41).

Burning thus with envy of the rival who was rich in the possession of a son, and neglected by the King, their hatred grew apace. In their insensate hatred and fury against the King, the cruel women administered poison to the child. Kṛtadyuti, unaware of the terrible outrage committed by her rivals, thought that the child was sleeping, and she busied herself about the house. Recollecting that the child had been asleep for a long time, the intelligent woman told the nurse, 'Bring me the child, my good woman'. Approaching the sleeping child, the nurse saw that the pupils of his eyes were turned up and that there was neither breath, nor movement of limbs, nor consciousness in him. And she fell down lamenting, 'Alas, I am undone!' Hearing her cry in agony, and violently beat her breast, the queen rushed to the side of her child and found that her infant son had died a sudden death. In her frenzied grief she fell down in a faint, her hair dishevelled and her clothes in disarray. The men and women attendants in the King's private apartments heard her weeping, and coming there grieved with her, sharing her sorrow. And those rivals who had done the dastardly deed pretended to weep too (42-49).

Hearing of the death of his son from cause unknown, the King, followed by his officials and the Brahmanas, came there with unseeing eyes, stumbling and falling; fainting under the overpowering grief caused by the affection that had grown day by day, he threw himself down at the feet of the dead child, his clothes and hair in wild disorder. He heaved long sighs, unable to speak, his throat blocked by tears (50-51).

Seeing her husband overwhelmed by grief, and her infant son and only heir dead, the queen lamented her loss, reciting her many woes and adding to the grief of her attendants and the ministers gathered there. Bathing her breasts, decorated with saffron and sandal paste, with her tears dyed by collyrium, her hair in disarray, the wreath fallen from her head, she wailed aloud for

her son like the female osprey : ' Ah ! how supremely foolish you are, O Creator, in doing what is harmful to your own creation, causing the death of the young while the old are alive ! If you say that you are indeed acting against your creation, you confess yourself their enemy. If there is no settled order of death or birth among men, and it all falls out in accordance with their own *karma*, let it be so by all means ; but then, why do you sever the bonds of affection which you yourself have forged, in order that the creation, your handiwork, may prosper ? (52-55).

' You, my child, should not desert me, leaving me helpless and miserable. Look at your father burning with grief. With your help we should easily escape the hell that awaits the childless. Do not go far, far away with the pitiless Yama. Get up, my child ; here are the children, your friends, calling you to play with them, O prince. You have slept long and must be hungry ; come, drink at my breast and allay the grief of us, your own folk. Having forfeited my good fortune, I could not see, when I came here, the innocent smile on your lotus face, my son, and its glad look. Have you, alas, been led away by pitiless death to the other world from which no one returns ? For I do not hear your sweet prattle ' (56-58).

Srī Suka said : While she thus lamented her dead son in many words, Chitraketu wept aloud in an agony of spirit. When the couple wept, all their followers, men and women wept too, and every one was beside himself with grief. Seeing that all of them were plunged in despair and oblivious of their surroundings, and that there was no one there who could open their eyes to the truth, the sage Angiras came there along with Nārada (59-61).

CHAPTER XV

CHITRAKETU'S DISILLUSIONMENT

Srī Suka said : As the King, overcome by grief, lay prostrate like one dead by the side of the dead child, they spoke to him, enlightening him in words instinct with sincerity and sympathy. ' How was he related to

you, great King, for whom you mourn? And how were you, of all God's creations, related to him in this life, or in some life past, and how might you be related in some future life? As the sands of a stream meet and part by the force of the current, so likewise do mortals under the march of time. As seed may grow from seed or may not, even so creatures may be born of other creatures, or they may not, according to the prompting of the Lord's *Māyā*. We, you and all these others, stationary and moving, who are our contemporaries, do not in reality exist any more today than we did before we were born or we shall do when we are dead. The Lord Who knows no birth and Who rules the destinies of all creatures, creates, sustains and destroys them, though He has nothing to gain by it, behaving in this like a child. And He uses as His instruments those who are His own creation, and who have no will of their own. A man is born to the body (of the father) from the body (of the mother), as seed is grown from seed. But the *jīva*, who tenants the body, is eternal, like the earth, for example. The distinction, and the relationship of concomitance between the body and the *jīva*, has existed from eternity through primordial ignorance, even as universals and particulars are posited in the undifferentiated Reality' (1-8).

Srī Suka said: Hearing those consoling words spoken by the Brahmanas, the King Chitraketu replied, wiping with his hand his face which was blanched by agony of mind. The King said, 'May I know who you are, who have come here? Endowed with wisdom and enlightenment, you are supremely great even among great men, though disguised in the habit of extreme poverty. Those Brahmanas who are dear to the Lord roam about the world at will, like madmen to all outward seeming, with the object of bringing enlightenment to those like me whose minds are absorbed in vulgar pleasures. Sanatkumāra, Nārada, Rbhu, Angiras, Devala, Asita, Apāntaratamas, Vyāsa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha, the exalted Lord Rama, Kapila, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, Durvāsa, Yājñavalkya, Jātūkarnī's son, Āruṇi, Romaśa, Chyavana, Dattātreya, Āsuri, Patanjali, the sage Veda-

śiras, Bodhya, the sage Panchaśiras, Hiranyanābha, Kauśalya, Srutadeva, R̥tadhwaṇa—these and other master-yogis thus go about the world, diffusing enlightenment. Therefore, be pleased, having the power, to light the lamp of knowledge for me, so that I, whose intelligence is clouded and whose mind is plunged in the darkness of ignorance, leaving me to wallow animal-like in worldly pleasures, may see the truth' (9-16).

Angiras told him, 'I am Angiras, O King, who gave you the son you desired, and this is the blessed sage Nārada, the son of Brahmā Himself. We thought of you, plunged in an ocean of grief by the loss of your son, and feeling that you, the devotee of the Lord, did not deserve to suffer, came here to do you a kindness; for the man who is devoted to the Brahmanas and to the Lord should not be left to despair. Even when I first came to your house, I could have imparted to you the highest knowledge; but as you were infatuated with other things, I gave you a son. You now experience the sufferings of those who have children; similar are those that result from the possession of a wife, home, wealth and various kinds of prosperity and power. The objects of enjoyment, sights and sounds, and so on, are unstable, even as the attributes of kingship are. One's kingdom, rulership, army, treasury, servants, officials, allies and subjects—all these, O King of the Sūrasenas, bring only sorrow, delusion, fear and misery. They are fleeting, like the phantom city of the Gandharvas. And they are as illusory as objects seen in a dream, or the magician's tricks, or the visions of reverie. They are the product of the mind, without any objective reality behind them, and they may vanish the next moment. It is because the mind of man hankers after objects of enjoyment, due to the residual impressions of past *karma*, that he is prompted to undertake new *karmas*. It is the body, made up of physical substances and of the organs of sense and action, that is said to be the cause of the manifold sufferings to which the man who regards the body as the Self is subject. Therefore investigate the truth of the Self with a collected mind; renouncing the delusive confidence that duality

is real, you will cease from all activity.' And Nārada told him, 'Receive attentively this *mantra*, through which may be attained the supreme blessing. By practising repetition of it for seven days, you will be able to see the Lord Sankarshaṇa. It was by seeking the sanctuary of His feet that in the far past Siva and others were freed from the error of duality and forthwith attained that greatness which is His, and which is unequalled, needless to say, unexcelled. And you too will attain it before long' (17-28).

CHAPTER XVI

CHITRAKETU'S VISION OF ANANTA

Srī Suka said: Then the celestial sage (Nārada) (reviving the dead child for the nonce) showed him to his sorrowing kinsmen, and addressed him thus, O King. Nārada said: 'O *jīva*, see how your father and mother, your ardent friends and relations, are grief-stricken on your account. Re-enter your body and enjoy, for the rest of your normal life, the enjoyments procured by your father, and occupy the King's throne' (1-3).

The *jīva* answered him thus: 'In what birth of mine were these my father and mother? For I have been wandering in the maze of *samsāra* by reason of my own *karmas* and taking many a birth as god or man or one of the lower creation. Every one is at one time or other related to every one else as relation, kinsman, enemy, friend, neutral, or as one who is hostile to him, or indifferent. Just as commodities like gold that are for sale change hands frequently, being bought by one and sold by another, so does the *jīva* go from one birth to another. Even with regard to living things, their relation to one another is not permanent and unalterable; and the egoistic, possessive attitude towards anything lasts only so long as the relationship lasts. The *jīva*, even when he is born to some one as his son, remains unchanged in truth and is not bound by egoistic notions. The parent or other who looks upon him as his own, does so only so long as that relationship

subsists. The *jīva* in his pristine state is eternal, immutable, unmanifest; he is the abode of all that is, and self-luminous. He, who is all-capable, creates out of himself the universe by means of the *guṇas* of his own power of *Māyā*. No one is specially dear to him, neither is any one specially repugnant; no one is regarded by him as his own or as alien to him. He is aloof and unconcerned, the witness of the workings of all minds—of those who are friendly and those who are inimical. The *Ātman* does not experience happiness or misery, the fruits of action; he remains (in the body), unattached, being master of himself, and merely witness of the world of cause and effect' (4-11).

Srī Suka went on: Having said this, the *jīva* departed. And his relations, marvelling, sundered the chains forged by affection and gave up grieving. His kinsmen, having disposed of the body, performed the appropriate obsequial rites, and freed themselves from that grief which it is so hard to set aside and which brings sorrow, delusion, fear and suffering. Remembering what the Brahmana (Angiras) had said, the women who were guilty of the murder, and had had their lustre dimmed by that sin, were heartily ashamed of themselves; and they performed on the Yamunā the rites of expiation for child-murder which have been prescribed by Brahmanas, great King. Chitraketu, having been thus awakened to the truth of the Self by the words of the Brahmanas, emerged from the blind well of the domestic life like an elephant from the mire of the lake. Having bathed, as ordained, in the Kālindī, and offered libations of holy water, he came and prostrated himself before the sons of Brahmā, observing silence, and with his senses under control. Thereupon the blessed sage Nārada, pleased with him, imparted to him, a devotee of the Lord who had placed himself with unquestioning trust in his hands, and who was fully qualified to receive it, the following *mantra* representing secret teaching: 'Om, we make our prostrations to Thee mentally, and meditate on Thee, O exalted Lord Vāsudeva, and we do the same to Thee in Thy different aspects as Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Sankarṣaṇa. Salutations to Thee That art pure con-

sciousness and the Embodiment of Bliss, That findest all delight in Thyself and art unruffled by the passions, and repulseth the notion of duality. Salutations to Thee That art so wrapped up in the Bliss of the Self that the vicissitudes caused by Thy Power of *Māyā* cannot touch Thee. Salutations to Thee, the Almighty Lord, and Controller of the senses, to Thee That hast the universe for Thy body. May the Lord protect us, Who, when speech and mind retire baffled from Him, alone shines, being pure *Chit*, without name or form, and Who is the Cause of the coming into existence of the world of cause and effect. Salutations to Thee, the Brahma, in Which all this universe is manifested, from Which it issues and in Which it is preserved and in due course destroyed, and Which is continuously present in all creation, as in things made of earth earth is continuously present. I make my salutations to That Which, though pervading all things within and without like space, neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the organs of sense, can apprehend, nor the organs of action seize. The body and the organs of sense and action, the vital airs, the mind and the intellect are active when animated by a fraction of Its power of intelligence (in the waking and dreaming states), but not when they are not (as in sleep), even as a piece of iron does not burn when touched, unless it has been heated first. And It is Itself spoken of as the Witness (the *jīva*) in the appropriate context.¹ *Om* : Salutations to Thee, the exalted Lord, the Mahāpurusha supremely great, the Possessor of all divine attributes, Whose lotus feet are pressed gently by the joined palms that look like lotus buds, of the entire world of devotees; salutations to Thee, the Supreme Ruler of the universe' (12-25).

Srī Suka said : Having thus instructed in this sacred lore the devotee who put his whole trust in the Lord, Nārada went back with Angiras to the abode of Svayambhū, my lord. And Chitraketu, subsisting on water, recited with a collected mind this *mantra* as he had learnt it from Nārada. When he had continuously recited it for seven days, he obtained the position of

¹ The waking and dreaming states.

unassailable leadership over the Vidyādhara. Having within a few days acquired the ability to go wherever he willed, by virtue of a mental power sharpened by this lore, he sought the feet of the God of gods, Sesha. He beheld the All-powerful Lord, surrounded by the master-adepts, His body white as lotus-fibre, clad in dark raiment, adorned with a dazzling crown, armlets, girdle and bracelets, His face with the red eyes, graciously inclined to the devotee. Freed from all sins by sight of Him, his heart cleansed of all impurities, he approached Him silently and made his prostrations to the Primordial Lord, his eyes filling with tears of love, and the hair on his body standing on end in his surging devotion. Bathing with the tears of love the seat on which the feet of the illustrious Lord rested, his tongue unable to utter a syllable, choked with the love that welled up in him, he could not utter His praises for quite a long time. Then, controlling his mind by an effort of will, and restraining the outward ranging of the senses, he, who had regained his power of speech, addressed the Teacher of the worlds, Whose appearance answered to the description in the devotional scriptures (26-33).

Chitraketu said: 'Thy heart is won, O Invincible Lord, by Thy saintly devotees, who look upon all things with an equal eye and who have controlled the senses; and they likewise yield themselves to Thee, because in Thy infinite kindness Thou givest even Thyself to those that worship Thee with disinterested devotion. The creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds is mere play to Thee, O Lord. Those who bring them into existence are but fractions of a fraction (the Purusha) of Thee; but, flattering themselves that they are all independent creators in their own right, they dispute vainly among themselves. Thou wert before the first atom came into existence, and Thou remainest after the entire universe has been dissolved, and Thou existest in the interim as well, and art Thyself without beginning, middle or end. That which stands four square before anything comes into being and remains similarly steadfast when everything has been destroyed, alone exists in the interval too. This cosmic

egg (like a bud with its sheaths), is enveloped by seven covers, earth and so on, each one ten times bigger than that which it covers. Thou art Ananta (the Infinite Lord), because within Thee whirls like an atom this cosmic egg with millions like it. The human animals who thirst after pleasures worship Thy subordinate powers (such as Indra), not Thee, the Supreme. With the destruction of those powers are destroyed the felicities enjoyed by these by their grace, as do those of the retainers of a royal family when that family is destroyed, O Lord. Even the pleasures of the senses, if sought of Thee That art pure Consciousness untouched by the *guṇas*, cannot involve one in future births, any more than fried seeds could grow and multiply. It is due to the impact of the *guṇas* that the *jīva* is subject to the sway of the pairs of opposites (34-39).

'Thou didst win Thy supreme victory, O Lord That art ever invincible, when Thou taughtest the flawless *Dharma*, to which Thy devotees cleave, and which is assiduously practised by the sages who look upon nothing as their own and who find all delight in the Self, in order to win liberation. In that *Dharma*, which leads one to the Lord, there is no room for the vitiated outlook based upon a sense of difference. What is done prompted by such bias as goes with the notions of "you and me" and "yours and mine", is impure, ephemeral in its results and attended with much that is evil and unrighteous. What happiness could result, or what gain could accrue to himself or to others from any *Dharma* which a man practises, if it involves suffering either for himself or for them? He merely incurs Thy anger by inflicting unnecessary suffering and privation on himself, while he is guilty of unrighteousness in inflicting it on others. Thy object in proclaiming the *Bhāgavata Dharma* can never fail; those who are the elect of the earth, seeing as they do only Thee in all the world of the stationary and the moving, faithfully follow it. There is nothing extravagant in the claim, O Lord, that all the sins of those men should be dispelled, who are vouchsafed sight of Thee, when even the Pulkasa who happens to hear Thy name uttered just once is freed from the bondage

of *samsāra*. Therefore we are this day rid of the sins that have tainted the mind, thanks to the vision vouchsafed to us of Thee. How could what the celestial sage, Thy devotee, said, fail to occur? Thou, the Inner Ruler in all creatures, knowest, O Ananta, all that men do here. What could there be that we could tell Thee, the Supreme Mentor, any more than fire-flies can reveal aught to the sun? Salutations to Thee, O Lord That art paramount over the preservation, destruction and creation of the worlds, to Thee, Immaculate Spirit, the essential truth of Whom can never be known to the false yogis labouring under the sense of difference. I make my prostrations to the Lord of the thousand heads, borne on one of which the earth appears like a mustard seed; by Whose prompting the organs of action in all creatures are active, even as their organs of sense apprehend their objects' (40-48).

Srī Suka said: Thus praised by him, the exalted Lord Ananta was pleased, and He spoke to Chitraketu, the Ruler of the Vidyādhara, as follows, O first of the Kurus. The Lord said: 'You, O King, have found fulfilment by means of the teaching pertaining to Me and the secret lore that was imparted to you by Nārada and Angiras, and also by having sight of Me. I am Myself all the creatures that are, and I am, too, the experiencing soul in them; I am the cause of their coming into existence and the Director and Controller of their activity; for the Veda and the Supreme Brahma are both my eternal bodies. You should learn to look upon the *Ātman* as present throughout the objective world (as experiencer) and the world as pervaded by the *Ātman*, while both are grounded in Me and pervaded by Me. It often happens that a dreamer dreams that he had been in a state of profound slumber and has passed into a dream in which he sees the world within himself; and a little later he imagines that he has waked up and finds himself lying down in a particular place. In the same way the states of waking, dream and sleep of men's everyday experience are not native to the soul but are the different states of the intellect (the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*), which are superimposed on the *Ātman* by Māyā. By keeping these things in

mind one should realize that the *Ātman*, the witness of these different states, is different from them. You should see that the *Ātman*, by reason of whose presence as witness the *jīva*, plunged in dreamless sleep, knows that he has slept soundly, experiencing a happiness which was beyond the reach of the senses, is none other than Me, the Brahma. When a man remembers both his dreamless sleep and his waking from it, he must draw the natural conclusion that that which was concomitantly present in both states must be different from either. That *Ĵnāna* (Consciousness) is the Brahma, and not something different from It. When a man forgets that the Brahma is My essential form, he comes to regard it as different from the *Ātman* (his own self), and the result is that he gets caught in the cycle of life and death. The man who, having achieved birth as a human being and thus secured the means of attaining knowledge and enlightenment, does not realize the truth about the Self, can never know peace. Remembering the weariness involved in the pursuit of the way of works and how often the result is the contrary of what is desired, while freedom results from renunciation, the wise man should cease from willing and striving. A married couple perform *karmas* hoping for happiness and the avoidance of misery; but there follows neither cessation of misery, nor happiness. Keeping in mind this frustration of all their hopes, which men who flatter themselves on their energy and enterprise experience, and realizing the transcendent nature of the *Ātman*, which is free from the three states and exceedingly difficult to know, one should free oneself by one's power of discrimination from the pleasures that beguile the senses, and, while being supremely content in the possession of knowledge and enlightenment, cultivate devotion to Me. The one truth that men whose intelligence has been strengthened by their skill in yoga should realize, since it is the supreme end of all human endeavour, is the identity of the Paramātmā and one's own soul. Constantly and vigilantly meditating on what I have taught you, O King, you shall soon find knowledge and enlightenment and realize the goal of life' (49-64).

Srī Suka said: Having thus assured Chitraketu, Hari, the Mentor and Soul of the universe, disappeared before his eyes (65).

CHAPTER XVII

CHITRAKETU INCURS PĀRVATTI'S CURSE

Srī Suka said: Having made his bow in the direction in which Ananta had disappeared, Chitraketu, the Vidyādhara, moved at will along the sky, going where he pleased. For a million years the master-yogi, with unimpaired strength and vigour, diverted himself in the valleys of the great Kulapārvata, where every kind of supernatural power was obtained by mere willing, hearing the glories of the Supreme Lord Hari sung by Vidyādhara women, while the sages and the Siddhas and Chāraṇas extolled him. Once, as he was flying along in the shining aerial car given him by Vishnu, he beheld Girīśa, Who was attended by Siddhas and Chāraṇas, and Who, in the presence of the sages, had His arms round the Goddess seated on His lap. Observing this, he laughed aloud very near where they were, and he spoke thus in the Goddess's hearing. Chitraketu said: 'Here is the Mentor of the worlds and propagator of Dharma, One who is foremost among embodied souls, sitting in the assembly intimately joined with His spouse. He wears matted locks and is noted for His austere penance. He is the president of the assembly in which learned men discourse on the Veda. And yet He sits there, feeling no shame, with a woman on his lap, like any common mortal. Even ordinary men rarely dally with women in public. But He, though vowed to strict continence, sits with the woman (on his lap) in the assembly' (1-8).

Srī Suka said: The exalted Lord of the unplumbed wisdom laughed on hearing what he said, O King, but was silent, and all who were present in the assembly followed Him. When he (Chitraketu), who did not know His puissance, said too freely what was wrong and unbecoming, the Goddess was angered by the impudent presumption of the man who imagined that he had

won control over the senses, and she spoke as follows. Pārvati said: 'And when did this person become master of the worlds, their ruler and chastiser, with power to make himself unpleasant to wicked and shameless creatures like us? Apparently what is Dharma is not known to him (Brahmā) who is seated on the lotus, nor to Bhṛgu, Nārada and other sons of Brahmā, nor indeed to Sanatkumāra, Kapila and Manu and all these sages here, who do not restrain Hara from acting contrary to the Sāstra! Since this unworthy Kshattriya, in his insolence, treats enlightened souls as if they were ignoramuses, and presumes to sit in judgment on Him, the Mentor of the worlds, Whose lotus feet are worthy of the devoted contemplation of all those here, Who is the very embodiment of the highest Dharma, he must be punished. Conceited and arrogant, he does not deserve to approach the feet of the Lord of Vaikuntha, to which good men are devoted. In order that you may not again offend against the great, you shall, stupid child, fall into a wicked Asura birth' (9-15).

Srī Suka said: When he was thus cursed, Chitraketu got down from his aerial car, and bowing to the ground before Satī, pacified her. Chitraketu said: 'I accept with folded hands the curse you have laid on me, O Ambikā; what the gods decree against a mortal is without a doubt what he has earned by his own past deeds. Caught in the vortex of life and death, deluded by ignorance, the creature experiences both joy and sorrow always and everywhere. Neither one oneself nor another is the cause of one's happiness or misery; it is one's ignorance that makes one think so. In this perpetual flux of *samsāra*, what does a curse or a blessing mean, or heaven or hell, or joy or sorrow? The Lord alone creates all beings, using His own power of Māyā; and while He Himself is free from all ties, He is the author of their bondage and liberation, of their happiness and misery. No one is dear to Him, nor is any one the object of His dislike; to Him none is either kin or relation, own or alien. He in Whose eyes all are equal, Who knows no attachments, can have no reason to love anything because of the pleasure it gives Him; how then could there be any question of His feel-

ing aversion? While that is so, the *karmas* of men (both good and bad) caused by His Power of *Māyā*, are productive of happiness and misery, welfare and misfortune, bondage and liberation, birth and death and the transmigratory travail. Therefore, I shall not beseech your grace, O angry goddess, to be freed from the curse; but be pleased, O noble dame, to pardon what you regard as an offence' (16-24).

Srī Suka said: Having thus propitiated Girīśa and the goddess, Chitraketu departed in his own aerial car, leaving them marvelling. Thereupon the exalted Lord Rudra thus spoke to Rudrāṇī, in the hearing of the celestial sages, Daityas, Siddhas, and His own attendants. Srī Rudra said: 'You have now seen for yourself, O lovely One, the greatness of those mighty souls, free from all desire, who are the servants of the servants of Hari of the marvellous deeds. Those who put their trust in Narayana fear nothing from any quarter, for they regard with equal detachment heaven, hell and liberation alike. All creatures are subject, by reason of their being joined to bodies, to the sway of the pairs of opposites caused by the Lord's *Māyā*, such as happiness and misery, death and birth, curses and blessings. To seek to distinguish between them, regarding some as good and others as bad, is to show oneself lacking in the power of judgment; it is as much an illusion as the joy and the sorrow that one experiences (in a dream), or the mistaking of a wreath for a snake. (25-30).

'To men who have devotion to Vāsudeva and are sustained by the strength of their knowledge and detachment, nothing in the world can be a potent attraction. Neither I nor Virinchi, Sanatkumāra, Nārada, nor the other sons of Brahmā, neither the sages nor the great gods know His mind. How then could those who are but fractions of His fractions, know His essential Self, though they think in their conceit that they are independent rulers? There is no one who is dear to Him, and no one who is repugnant, no one who is His own, and no one who is alien. But, being the Soul in all creatures, He is dear to all of them. This Chitraketu is supremely blest, being His beloved devotee; he looks

upon all with an equal eye and has won abiding tranquillity. And I am dear to Achyuta too. One should not take amiss anything that great souls might do, those souls who are the devotees of the Lord Vishnu, and have won tranquillity and equipoise' (31-35).

Srī Suka said : The Goddess Umā, having heard what the Lord Siva said, understood. She was no longer surprised or angry (with Chitraketu). That devotee of the Lord, though he was fully able to give curse for curse, reverently accepted Her curse. For such is the nature of the saintly. Endowed with knowledge and enlightenment, he (Chitraketu) was born as an Asura, out of the Dakshināgni of Tvashtā, with the name of Vṛtra. And now I have told you what you wanted to know—why Vṛtra was born as an Asura, and was devoted to the Lord. The man who hears this sanctifying tale of the mighty Chitraketu and the description of the greatness of Vishnu's devotees, will be released from bondage. He who, rising early in the morning, thinks on Hari and reads this story attentively and silently, will attain the supreme goal (36-41).

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BIRTH OF THE MARUTS

Srī Suka said : Prsni, the wife of Savitā, the sun-god, gave birth to the goddess Sāvitrī and the goddesses ruling over the Vyāhrtis and the ritual portions of the Veda, and to the gods presiding over Agnihotra, Paśu-yāga, Soma-yāga, Chātur-māsya and the five daily *yajnas*. Siddhi, the wife of Bhaga, gave birth, my friend, to Mahimā, Vibhu, Prabhu, and Āśis, a beautiful daughter of excellent disposition. Dhātā's wife Kuhū bore him a son, Sāyam ; his wife Śinīvālī, Darśa ; his wife Rākā, Prātar ; and his wife Anumati, Pūrnāmāsa, in due succession. Vidhātā begot on Kriyā the deities presiding over the five sacred fires known as the Purishyas. Varuṇa had a wife Charshaṇī, of whom Bhrgu was reborn ; and to Varuṇa was also born, as is well-known, Vālmiki, the great yogi, from an ant-hill. The sages Agasthya and Vasishta were the sons of

Mitra and Varuṇa. They (Mitra and Varuṇa) had poured into a pot the seminal fluid which escaped from them in the presence of Urvaśī. Mitra begot on Revati Utsarga, Arishta and Pippala. We have heard it said that the all-powerful Indra begot on Paulomī Jayanta, Rshabha and Midhwān. The Lord of the Mighty Strides, Who took the deluding form of the dwarf, begot on His spouse Keerti, Br̥hatsloka, and to him were born Saubhaga and others. I shall later describe the exploits, qualities and powers of the Almighty Lord, Who was born to Kaśyapa of Aditi, O King (1-9).

I shall now tell you of the sons born to Kaśyapa of Diti, in whose family appeared the great devotees of the Lord, Prahrāda and Bali. Diti had only two sons at first, Hiranyakaśipu and Hiranyāksha, and these have been already described. Hiranyakaśipu's wife was Kayādu, a Dānavī, daughter of Jambha, who gave her in marriage to Hiranyakaśipu. She bore him four sons, of whom the eldest was Samhrāda, the others being Anuhrāda, Hrāda and Prahrāda. Their sister Simhikā bore to Viprachitti a son Rāhu, whose head was cut off by Hari with the discus when he was drinking the nectar of immortality. Samhrāda's wife Kṛtī bore him a son Panchajana. Dhamani, the wife of Hrāda, bore him Ilvala and Vātāpi, the latter of whom (Ilvala) cooked Vātāpi to feed the sage Agasthya, whom he had invited to be his guest. Anuhrāda had, by Sūrmyā, Bāshkala and Mahisha. Virochana was the son of Prahrāda; his wife Devi bore him a son Bali. Bali had a hundred sons of Aśanāyā, of whom the eldest was Bāṇa. Bali's greatness, which is worthy of extensive praise, will be dwelt upon later. Bāṇa, by propitiating Girīśa, obtained the position of Chief of His followers. To this day the exalted Lord Śiva abides by his side, as the Guardian of his City. The Maruts, who were forty-nine in number, were the sons of Diti; they were issueless, and Indra assimilated them to his own kind (10-19).

The King asked, 'How did they get over their *āsuric* nature, derived from their birth, and were transformed by Indra into godhood? What was the worthy

deed they did, teacher mine? These sages here listen attentively, along with me, O Brahman, to know all about it. Therefore be pleased to explain' (20-21).

The Sūta said: The omniscient son of Bādarāyaṇa heard with pleasure that question of Viṣṇurāta, brief but eager and meaningful, and his heart overflowing with joy, welcomed it and answered as follows, O sage that are engaged in the Sattra sacrifice. Śrī Suka said: Diti, whose sons had been slain by Viṣṇu, Who engaged in the fray as Sakra's second, burned with anger sharpened by grief, as she brooded over it. 'When shall I lie down peacefully to sleep, having contrived the slaughter of this wicked Indra, who, cruel, hard-hearted, and sensual, has murdered his brothers? He who is guilty of cruelty to living beings for the sake of the body—that body which, though it had been a king's, comes in due course to be known as worm, ordure or ash—assuredly does not know his own lasting good, for he is bound for hell. How shall I get a son who will quench the pride of Indra who, in his overweening arrogance, thinks that the body and the like are eternal?' With the thought in her mind that this could be accomplished only by pleasing her husband, she propitiated him by assiduously waiting upon him and serving him lovingly, with humility and self-control. By her intense devotion, her ravishingly sweet speech, and her smiling glances, she, who could read his heart, captivated him. It is not surprising that he who, though a learned man, was as wax in the hands of a clever woman, submissively told her that he would do what she wanted. The Creator, seeing at the beginning of his work that all men were aloof and unattached, made a woman out of one half of his own (Brahmā's) body; and she ravished the male mind (20-30).

The blessed sage Kaśyapa was greatly pleased with the assiduous service of his wife. He praised Diti and spoke to her with a happy laugh. Kaśyapa said: 'Ask for anything you like, my lovely dear, I am pleased with you, O flawless one. What desire cannot a woman gratify in this world, if her husband is pleased with her? It is the spouse that is regarded as the supreme god of the wife. Vāsudeva, the Consort

of Śrī, abides in the hearts of all creatures. It is He that is worshipped by all men through the different gods invoked by their several names and forms, and by women through their husbands. That is why chaste women, who desire blessings, worship with exclusive devotion the Supreme Lord, the Soul of the universe, in the person of their spouses. I shall therefore ensure the fulfilment of your desires, which would be beyond the reach of unworthy women, because you have honoured and served me, entertaining such exalted notions of your husband, worthy dame' (31-36).

Diti told him, 'If you are willing to grant me a boon, O Brahman, let me, whose sons are dead, have a son who will be immortal and who will slay Indra, who caused my sons to be slain' (37).

Hearing what she said, the Brahmana was unhappy. He was overwhelmed with remorse, as he reflected, 'Alas, I have done what is grossly unjust and unrighteous. Delighting in the pleasures of the senses, I have succumbed to the Māyā which puts on the guise of a woman, and in abject misery I shall go to hell without a doubt. It is no sin in a woman that she follows her own bent; but how despicable of me that I, failing to control my senses, should have been totally oblivious of my own true interest! With a face smiling expansively, like the autumn lotus, and a gift for speech that falls like nectar on the ear, women have hearts sharp as a razor; who can hope to plumb a woman's thoughts! No-one whatever is dear to women, who can however dissemble by behaving, for the furtherance of their own purposes, as if you were dear to them as their own soul. They will kill, or have killed by others, even their own husband, son or brother to gain their ends. Well, I have promised her that I would grant her wish; that promise should not be broken. But Indra does not deserve to die. To serve both ends, this is how I must set about the business' (38-43).

Having thus made up his mind, the sage Kaśyapa spoke with some heat, while blaming himself. 'You shall have a son, O dame, who will be the slayer of Indra, if you observe the prescribed vows strictly for a year; if you fail, he will be friendly to the gods' (44-45).

Diti promised, 'I shall observe the vows with all strictness, O Brahman. Tell me what I should do without fail, what I should avoid doing, as prohibited because it would constitute a breach of the vows, and what I may do without detriment to them' (46).

Kaśyapa told her: 'The woman who would observe these vows should do no injury to any creature; she should neither abuse any one nor utter a lie. She should not cut her hair or pare her nails, or touch anything that is inauspicious. She should not bathe by taking a dip in running water. She should not be angry with any one or speak with bad men and women. She should not wear clothing that is not spotlessly clean, nor use a discarded wreath. She should not eat of others' leavings, nor food that ants had fed on, nor food containing flesh fetched by a Sūdra, or seen by a woman in her periods; nor should she drink water with her cupped hands. She should not go out of the house without washing her hands and mouth after food; nor do so in the evening with her hair hanging loose, or without adorning herself properly, covering herself or maintaining silence. She should not lie down to sleep without washing her feet and drying them, or in a state of impurity, or with her head to the north or the west; nor should she lie in bed with another, or naked, or at the twilight hour, morning or evening. Wearing clean clothes always, observing purity, and uniting herself with all that is auspicious, she should worship, before her first meal, the cow, a Brahmana, the Goddess Sṛī and Achyuta. She should worship women who have their husbands living, adorning them and offering wreaths, perfumes and food. Worshipping her husband with all devoutness, she should remain by his side and meditate on him as conceived in her womb. If you can observe these "Pumsavana" vows without a break or flaw for a year, you will have a son who would be able to slay Sakra' (47-54).

Diti, who was firm in her resolution, said, 'Very well'. And bearing Kaśyapa's virility in her womb, she strictly observed the vow. The sagacious Indra, knowing the intentions of his mother's sister, busied himself serving Diti while she lived in her hermitage,

O noble one. Every day at stated hours he would fetch for her from the forest flowers, fruits, roots, twigs to offer in the fire, *darbha* grass, leaves, sprouts, earth and water. Thus the crafty Indra served her as she observed her vows, waiting for his opportunity, when she might, by some mischance, act in contravention of her vows, O King, much like the hunter of deer who disguises himself as one. When he, who was ever vigilant, got no such opportunity as laxity on her part might offer, Sakra was despondent, wondering, 'How can I secure my own good in this crisis?' But one day she, tired by her vows and taken in by fate, fell asleep in the evening in a state of impurity without having touched water or washed her feet. Finding his opportunity, Sakra, master of yoga, entered the womb of Diti, who was insensible in sleep, by his *yogic* powers, and with the thunderbolt he cut the embryo, which was a golden yellow in complexion, into seven pieces. As they cried, he cut each of them again into seven, telling them, 'Do not cry'. As he went on cutting them, they asked him with folded hands, O King, 'Why should you wish to kill us, the Maruts, who are your brothers, O Indra?' Reassured that the seven Marut clans would become devoted to him and serve him as his attendants, he told them, 'If you are my brothers indeed, you need have no fears'. Because of the compassion shown to it by the exalted Lord, the Consort of Śrī, the child in Diti's womb did not die, though cut into many pieces by the thunderbolt; even as you did not, when cut by the celestial weapon of Droṇa's son. The man who offers worship to the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu) even once attains similarity to Him; and Diti had worshipped Hari for almost a year. The Maruts became gods, making up fifty in number along with Indra; they were purified of the taint inherited through their mother and made partakers of nectar by Indra (55-67).

Diti, on waking up, saw her sons, who glowed like fire and were in the company of Indra, and the blameless goddess rejoiced. She told Indra, 'Wishing for a son who would be a terror to the sons of Aditi, I observed these exceedingly difficult vows, my son. I

wanted but one son ; how did forty-nine come into existence ? If you know, my son, tell me truly, do not tell a lie.' Indra replied, 'Knowing your purpose, mother, I came to you ; and when I got the opportunity, I cut the child in your womb to pieces. He who is intent on securing his own interest does not bother about Dharma. The embryo, cut into seven pieces by me, became as many infants ; they too were again cut, each into seven, but did not die. Seeing that extraordinary thing, I concluded that this must be an incidental gain from the worship of the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu). Those who propitiate the exalted Lord, entertaining no desires, not even for liberation, know what is truly good for them. What sensible man would propitiate the exalted Lord, Who gives even Himself, Who is the Soul and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, only to beg of Him the pleasures of the senses, which can be had even in hell ? Be pleased, O mother, who are supremely great, to pardon this transgression due to my stupidity and wickedness. Luckily the child in your womb has risen from the dead' (68-76).

Srī Suka said : Taking leave of her, who was pleased with his honesty, and making his prostrations to her, the mighty Indra departed with the Maruts to heaven. And now, I have told you all about the auspicious birth of the Maruts, which you wanted to know. What else would you like to hear ? (77-78).

CHAPTER XIX

THE PUMSAVANA RITE

The King said : 'I' should be glad to know, O Brahman, how one should perform the rite described by you, which has for its object the propitiation of Vishnu for obtaining progeny' (1).

Srī Suka said : With the consent of her husband a woman should commence the observance of those vows, which can bring one all that the heart desires, on the first day of the bright fortnight of the month Mārgaśīrsha. After listening to the account of the birth of the Maruts and obtaining the permission of

Brahmanas, she, who should have already cleaned her teeth and bathed and donned white raiment, and suitably adorned herself, should worship before her morning meal the exalted Lord along with the Goddess Śrī. 'Having no desires, Thou lackest nought, I make my salutations to Thee, O Lord That hast all that the heart could desire. I make my salutations to Thee, the Spouse of Lakshmi, That possessest all the supernatural powers. Thou, O Paramount Lord, art possessed of compassion, opulence, power, greatness and strength and all other noble qualities, therefore art Thou exalted over all others as the Paramount Lord. O Spouse of Vishnu, Mahāmāyā That hast all the qualities that distinguish the Mahāpurusha, and art supremely blest, may Thou be gracious to Me; O Mother of the worlds, I make my reverence to Thee (2-5).

'Om: Salutations to the exalted Lord, to the Mahāpurusha, the Lord supremely great, the Spouse of Lakshmi. I make my offerings to Thee and to Thy glorious spouses.' Uttering this *mantra*, the worshipper should, with a collected mind, do the invocation of Vishnu (in His image) every day and offer water for washing the feet, *arghya* and *āchamana*, then bathe the image, clothe and invest it with the sacred thread and with ornaments, make offerings of scents, flowers, and incense, wave lights, and present food offerings. The sanctified remnants of the food offerings should be poured as oblations in the fire, twelve such oblations being made with the *mantra*, 'Om: Salutations to the exalted Lord, the Mahāpurusha, the Spouse of Mahālakshmi, Svāhā!' He who desires all opulence should constantly worship with devotion Śrī and Vishnu, Granters of boons and Bestowers of all blessings. He should fall down on the ground like a stick in prostration before them with a heart melting with love, recite the *mantra* ten times and then utter the following hymn of praise: 'You two are the all-powerful Rulers of the worlds, the first Cause of their coming into existence. The Goddess is the unmanifest Prakṛti, the insuperable power of Māyā. Thou, O Lord, art her Overlord, and Purushottama. Thou art all the sacrifices. She is the will to, and the activity

connected with the offering of sacrifice, as well as all secular activity. Thou art the enjoyer of the fruits. The Goddess is the phenomenal universe constituted by the *gunas*. Thou art time that prompts the manifestation thereof and the experiencer of the *gunas*. Thou art the soul inhabiting all bodies ; the Goddess *Srī* is the body, the organs, and the mind. The exalted Goddess is Name and Form, Thou art their support and manifest. As you two are the supreme Overlords of the worlds and the Granters of boons, may my most cherished wishes come true, O Illustrious Lord' (6-14).

Having thus extolled the Lord, Who is the Abode of *Srī*, and the Granter of boons, as well as *Srī* herself, the worshipper should remove the offerings made, and then giving them water for *āchamana* worship Hari. Then, with a mind melting with devotion, she should praise Hari, and after smelling the sanctified remnants of the food offerings, worship Him again. And she should make her prostrations to her husband with infinite devotion, looking upon him as Vishnu Himself and offering him whatever is pleasing to him. And the loving husband should help her in all her duties, big and small. As this worship, done even by one only of a couple, redounds to the benefit of both, the husband should do the worship with a collected mind when the wife is disqualified. Whoever observes these vows dedicated to Vishnu should not allow them to be interrupted for any reason. Every day she should, observing due discipline, worship the Lord and propitiate Brahmanas and women with husbands living, with the offer of wreaths, scents, food and adornments. Restoring (the image of the Lord) to His abode (receptacle), she should divide with others worthy of reverence the food that had been offered Him and eat it for her own self-purification and for the realization of all wishes (15-20).

Having worshipped the Lord in this wise for a year consisting of twelve months, within which no intercalary month falls, the chaste wife should fast on the last day of *Kārtika*. Bathing at dawn the next day and worshipping Krishna as before, her husband should offer twelve oblations in the fire, of rice boiled in milk,

mixed with clarified butter, following the procedure prescribed for *Pāka-yajna*. Making his devout prostrations to the Brahmanas whom he has propitiated, and receiving their blessings on his head, he should eat with their permission. Then in the presence of the Āchārya and of his relations he should silently offer his wife the sanctified remnants of the broth, which will bring all blessings, and the gift of good children (21-24).

The man who observes these vows sacred to the Lord, according to the rules, obtains whatever he desires ; and the woman who does it obtains good fortune, wealth, progeny, good repute, a house, and a husband who will survive her. The unmarried girl who does it will get a husband possessed of all desirable traits ; the widow, cleansed of her sins, will obtain release ; the woman whose children have died, will get sons who will live long ; and she who though wealthy is unlucky, will be favoured by fortune ; if she is ugly, she will obtain splendid beauty. He who suffers from any disease, however virulent, will be freed from it, and will be restored to sound health and regain the full vigour of his faculties. He who reads this, while engaged in any auspicious ceremony, will be giving infinite satisfaction to his manes and to the gods. And at the end of the *homa*, the god of fire, Śrī and Hari, being pleased with the worshipper, grant him all desires. I have thus told you, O King, the story that confers exceeding merit, of the birth of the Maruts and of the great penance practised by Diti (25-28).

(Here ends the *Sixth Book of Srimad-Bhāgavatam*.)

SRIMAD - BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK VII

CHAPTER I

THE LORD'S IMPARTIALITY

The King said : 'The exalted Lord, O Brahman, is the Friend and Beloved of all creatures and looks upon all of them with an equal eye. How then did He come to slay the Daityas to promote Indra's interest, as if He were actuated by partiality? He, Whose essential Self is Bliss, could have nothing to gain from the gods; nor could He entertain enmity against, or go in fear of the Asuras, since He is beyond the sway of the *guṇas*. This has raised considerable doubts in my mind in regard to the qualities and attributes of Nara-yana, supremely blessed sage; be pleased to resolve them' (1-3).

Srī Suka said : You have done well, O King, to question me on that marvellous exploit of Hari, which is sung by sages like Nārada. That story is calculated to bring out the greatness of the Lord's devotees, and inspire devotion to the Lord, and it confers great merit on him who hears it. Making my reverence to the sage Krishna (Dvaipāyana), I shall now relate that story of Hari. The exalted Lord, Who transcends Prakṛti and is free from all limiting attributes, Who knows no birth and is unburdened with a body, identifies Himself (sometimes) with the *guṇas* of His own Power of Māyā and acts as the attacker or the attacked. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, O King, are the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, they do not inhere in the soul; they do not all decline or grow at one and the same time. When *Sattva* is on top, the Lord favours the gods and the sages; when *Rajas* is dominant, He is on the side of the Asuras; when *Tamas* rules, He aids the Yakshas and Rākshasas. He thus acts in tune with the times. He appears to be manifold

like fire and other elements (as they show themselves in different media), but is not seen apart from the body complex in which He appears. It is only men of discernment who are able to realize the Paramātmān within by logical inquiry, after refuting other hypotheses. When He wishes to create bodies as vehicles for the experience of the *jīvas*, the Supreme Lord differentiates *Rajas* from the undifferentiated Prakṛti by His own power of Māyā, and increases it. When He wishes to entertain Himself in divers bodies, He differentiates and enhances the strength of *Sattva*. When He wishes to rest (withdrawing the world into Himself); He causes the increase of *Tamas*. The Supreme Lord, Who creates infallibly, using Pradhāna and Puruṣa as the proximate causes, gives them an ally in time (the present), and when that time (His creature) favours the increase of *Sattva*, the Lord; its Controller, acts as though He strengthened, because He loved them, the gods who are predominantly *sāttvic*, O King. And He of the immense fame destroys the Asura hordes, the enemies of the gods, who are predominantly *rājasic* and *tāmasic* in character (4-11).

To bring out this truth, O King, the celestial sage (Nārada), who was pleased with Ajātaśatru for questioning him in this connection, related to him the following legend years ago at the great sacrifice. On seeing that marvellous happening at the Rājāsūya sacrifice, the merging of the King of Chedi in the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the King, the son of Pāṇdu, was astonished, and he respectfully questioned the celestial sage, who was seated there, while the assembled sages listened. Yudhishtira said, 'Ah! how marvellous, this absorption into the Supreme Reality, Vāsudeva, of the King of Chedi, who was His enemy,—something which is exceedingly difficult to attain even for those who give their exclusive devotion to the Lord. We should like to know how it came to pass, O sage. Vena was thrown into hell by the Brahmanas because he had reviled the Lord. The wicked son of Damaghosha said nothing but what was marked by intolerance and spite against Govinda all his life, from the days when he could utter only children's prattle; and the stupid Dantavakra did the same.

Though they were thus incessantly abusing the Lord Vishnu, the supreme and eternal Brahma, their tongues did not rot, nor did they become tainted with white leprosy; neither did they fall into the darkest hell. (On the other hand) they quickly merged, while all the world was looking, in the exalted Lord, Whose essential Self is beyond the reach of the mind. How did that happen? This astounding occurrence bewilders and rocks my mind as the wind makes the flame of the lamp flicker. You are omniscient, O sage, please explain how it happened' (12-20).

Srī Suka went on: Nārada, the blessed sage, was pleased with the King's question, and he narrated the following tale before those who were assembled there. Nārada said: 'The body is the result of the inability to distinguish between Purusha and Prakṛti. And it is so constituted as to be sensitive to censure and praise, honour and disgrace, O King. It is because of their attachment to the body and their sense of possessiveness in it that all creatures experience pain from violence or harsh words. And the slaying of the body, which is the object of such attachment, is regarded as the slaying of the creature himself. But the Lord, Who is the One without a second and the soul in all creatures, is free from such attachments; how can violence be attributed to Him Who chastises the erring for their good? Therefore one should concentrate one's mind on the Lord so completely—either through inveterate enmity or through total freedom from it (that is, through steady and continuous devotion), or through fear, friendship or love, that he can think of nothing else. I am myself convinced that even through sustained devotion a man cannot so completely merge himself in the Lord as through inveterate enmity. The worm immured in the wall by the wasp, thinking of it incessantly, because of the combination of hatred and fear inspiring it, is transformed into the likeness of the wasp. Likewise, those who were purified of their sins by their constant preoccupation, arising from enmity, with the exalted Lord Krishna, the Supreme, Who masqueraded as a man, attained Him. Because of their continual absorption in the Lord either from the desire for physical

union or from hatred, either from fear or friendship, many were cleansed of the sin arising from entertaining such feelings towards Him, and attained Him, as others have reached Him through loving devotion. The Gopis gained Him by love, Kamsa by fear, the King of Chedi and other rulers of men by enmity, the Vṛshnis by their ties of kinship, you (the Pāṇdavas) by attachment, and we (the sages and other devotees) by devotion, my lord. In his attitude towards the Lord, Vena did not behave like any one of the five types (of those who are thus ever preoccupied with the Lord). From all this the conclusion emerges that one should achieve mental absorption in Krishna, through some means or other. The King of Chedi, your mother's sister's son, O Pāṇdava, and Dantavakra, who had been chief among the personal retinue of Vishnu, fell from their lofty abodes (in Vaikuntha), cursed by the Brahmanas (21-32).

Yudhishtira asked, 'Who uttered that curse, which could effect the downfall of a devotee of Hari, and what was the nature of it? It is difficult to believe that those who were wholly devoted to Hari could be made to take birth in this world. Be pleased to tell us the story of how those dwellers in Vaikuntha, who were untrammelled by a physical body and organs of sense and action, came to be saddled with bodies' (33-34).

Nārada thereupon told their story: 'The sons of Brahmā, Sanandana and his brothers, once happened, in the course of their peregrinations through the three worlds, to go to the world of Vishnu. The warders at the gate took them for infants, because they were naked and looked as if they were five or six years old, though they were in fact born even before the first Patriarchs; and they refused them admission. Angered by this, they cursed them saying, 'You do not deserve to live in the world that lies about the feet of the Foe of Madhu, since it is wholly free from *rajas* and *tamas*. Therefore, you stupid creatures shall take birth instantly as wicked Asuras'. As they, thus cursed, were about to fall from their world, they were again told by those merciful sages, 'You shall be restored to your realm after three lives.' Those two were born as the sons of Diti, and

were held in honour by all Daityas and Dānavas. Hiraṇyakaśipu was the senior, and Hiraṇyāksha was his younger brother. Hari slew Hiraṇyakaśipu, taking the form of a lion; and He slew Hiraṇyāksha when He, taking the form of a boar, was engaged in lifting up the earth. Hiraṇyakaśipu, wishing to slay his son Prahārāda, who was dear to Keśava, put him to many tortures. But, try as he might, he could not slay him who had identified himself with the soul in all creatures, seeing only the Brahma in them, and had thus found peace, and was pervaded through and through by the power of Hari. In their next birth, they were the Rākshasas, Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarna, the sons of Viśravas by Keśinī, who oppressed all the worlds. And the Lord, taking birth as the scion of the Raghus for this purpose, slew them in order to free them from the curse. You shall hear from Mārkaṇḍeya of the prowess of Rama, my lord. Those two were again born as Kshattriyas, the sons of your mother's sisters, and have just been freed from the curse, their sins dispelled by Krishna's discus. Having achieved assimilation to the form of Achyuta by constantly thinking of Him, because of their fierce animosity, they were again restored to Hari's presence, as the personal attendants of Vishnu (35-46).

CHAPTER II

HIRANYAKASIPU MOURNS HIS BROTHER

Nārada said: When his brother was slain by Hari, taking the form of a boar, Hiraṇyakaśipu's heart burned with anger and grief, O King. Shaking all over with anger, and biting his lips, and looking at the sky, which seemed smoke-coloured, with eyes that blazed, he spoke thus. With his trident raised aloft, and with a forbidding frown on his face, the more frightening because of his fierce tusks, he addressed the Dānavas in their assembly: 'Hear carefully what I am going to tell you, O Daityas and Dānavas—you Dvimūrdhā, Tryaksha, Sambara, Satabāhu, Hayagrīva, Namuchi, Ilvala and Viprachitti—and then do as I tell you with-

out delay. My dearly beloved brother and staunch well-wisher has been slain by my puny and worthless enemies, employing Hari, Who though bound to be impartial, acted as their henchman because they had cultivated His favour. He was untrue to Himself, masquerading as a wild beast, though His essence is pure Light. With the fickleness of a child, He sides with those who make up to Him. I shall cut His throat with my trident and propitiate with copious libations of blood my brother who loved blood, and shall thus relieve my agony. When He, our crafty foe, disappears, the gods, whose life is Vishnu, will wither away like the branches of a giant tree when its root is severed. Meanwhile, go to the places on earth where Brahmanas and Kshatriyas are found in large numbers, and slaughter those who engage in austerities, sacrifices, the study of the Veda, the observance of vows and the giving of gifts. Vishnu, being Himself the Sacrifice, and one with Dharma, is sustained by the rituals practised by Brahmanas; and He is the support of the gods, the sages, the manes and all other creatures, and of Dharma. Go to all regions where Brahmanas, cows, the Vedas, the *varṇas* and *āśramas*, and the rites prescribed for them flourish, burn them and cut down (the trees which provide them with their means of living)' (1-12).

Receiving with all humility and zeal this order of their master, they who loved violence practised it against the people. They burnt down towns, villages, cowpens, gardens, fields, parks, hermit settlements, mines, agriculturists' homesteads, mountain-villages, cowherd colonies and great (capital) cities. Some with spade and pick-axe demolished dams, ramparts and city gates; some cut down with the axe the trees that provided sustenance; others set fire to people's homes with burning fire-brands. When the world was thus harried again and again by the followers of the King of the Daityas, the gods abandoned heaven and wandered over the earth unseen (13-16).

The sorrowing Hiranyakaśipu, having done the obsequial rites for his dead brother, such as offering water libations, consoled his brother's sons. He, who knew what was appropriate to the place and occasion,

spoke these soothing words to Sakuni, Sambara, Dhrshta, Bhūtasantāpana, Vrka, Kālanābha, Mahānābha, Hariśmaśru, Utkacha and to their mother Rushābhānu, and to his own mother Diti, O King. Hiranyakaśipu said : ' You must not, O mother, nor you, my daughter and children, mourn for the hero slain. To die facing the foe is a death which is greatly esteemed and wished for by heroic souls. Men entangled in the transmigratory life are like wayfarers meeting at a water-shed, good lady. It is by their past *karmas* that they are brought together, and it is by their own *karma* that they are dispersed again. The soul is in truth immortal, unwaning, immaculate, all-pervading and omniscient ; it is different from the body. But, from ignorance, it is wedded to the subtle body, and takes to itself material bodies of a higher or a lower order. Just as trees reflected in water seem to move when the water is disturbed, and to the whirling eye the earth seems to go round and round, so does the soul, though its true nature is perfection, identify itself with the mind when the latter is disturbed by the *gunas*, and shares its responses (joys and sorrows). Though in truth it is not attached to the body, it behaves as if it were. This identification, from egoistic attachment, of the soul with the body, though it is other than the body, is due to its basic misapprehension of its true nature. It is this which makes it grieve over separation from what it loves, and hate being brought into contact with what it dislikes, and this is the cause of its doing works of various kinds, and its involvement in the transmigratory flux. To this men of wisdom attribute the experience of birth and death, sorrow from various causes, lack of wisdom, obsession with the objects of the senses, and lapse of the faculty of discrimination (17-26).

' To illustrate this there is told an old tale of a conversation between Yama and the relations of a dead man; listen carefully. In the Uśīnara country there lived a famous King called Suyajna. He was killed by his enemies in battle. His kinsmen gathered round him as he lay on the battle-field, his gem-set armour split open, his ornaments and wreaths scattered about, his heart pierced by an arrow, his body covered with blood, his hair in disarray, his eyes sunk in their sockets, his

teeth biting his lip in anger, his lotus face covered with dust, his arm, holding the weapon, cut down. His queens, overwhelmed by grief at the sight of the King of the Uśīnaras brought to this pass by fate, fell at his feet, beating their breasts and crying, "Alas, my lord, we are undone!" Weeping aloud, bathing the lotus feet of their beloved husband with their tears, reddened by the saffron on their breasts, their hair dishevelled, and their jewels scattered about, they lamented him, causing grief to those who heard them. "Alas, my lord, you have been translated by the pitiless Ruler of all destinities to a state which is beyond our ken. He has made you, who were the provider and supporter of the Uśīnaras in the old days, the cause of their suffering to-day. How can we live, O King, without you, the foremost of our well-wishers, one who possessed the liveliest sense of gratitude for what little one did for him? Therefore allow us, who serve at your feet, O valiant one, to accompany you where you go." As they thus lamented, embracing their dead spouse, unwilling to allow him to be taken for cremation, the sun set (27-35).

'Hearing the weeping and wailing of the relations of the dead man, Yama came there disguised as a young boy, and thus spoke to them. Yama said, "Ah! look at the delusion under which labour these people, who are so much older than me, and are well-acquainted with the unalterable facts of life. They mourn uselessly for a man who has but returned to where he came from, though they themselves are subject to the same fate. How much more fortunate we are than you! For, though we were abandoned here by our parents, and are weak and helpless, we have remained safe from the attack of ravenous wolves and other animals, and have not a care in the world. He who protects us in the womb is our Protector everywhere. All the worlds of the moving and the non-moving, O women, are spoken of as the playthings of the Immutable and Supreme Lord, Who alone creates, protects and destroys them by merely willing it, as He has paramount authority over life and death. What was dropped by the wayside remains intact, protected by Providence; while what is kept at home perishes if the Lord is against it. He who

finds himself alone and unfriended in the forest remains unharmed if the eye of the Lord is upon him; while he who is doomed by His decree cannot escape destruction, however carefully he may be guarded in his own home. All bodies, without exception, are created, and in due course destroyed, as the result of their own actions, which have moulded their subtle bodies. But the soul, though lodged in the body, does not partake of its qualities, being totally different in its nature. The body is identified by the *jīva* with the soul because of his ignorance; while in truth the body is different, because it is material and an object of perception, such as a house. Just as objects fashioned by particles of water, fire and earth perish, the body, built up by the same particles, undergoes changes in time, and dies. Fire, which burns a log of wood, is seen as different from it. Air, though found in all parts of the body, seems different in different parts of it, such as the mouth, the nose, and so on. *Ākāśa*, which is all-pervasive, remains unattached to anything. Likewise the soul, though it is the ground and support of the body, the organs and the rest, is different from them. You foolish women, do you not see Suyajna, whom you mourn, still lying here? If you are looking for him who spoke and heard what was said to him, why, he was never seen in this world! Even the great vital air (*mukhya-prāṇa*), the cause of the activities of all the organs, and therefore the chief of them all, neither speaks nor hears. The soul, which activates the body and the senses, and perceives the objects of the senses, is different from the vital air and the body. The soul, which is different from the bodies, which are distinguished by the elements, organs and mind, takes many a body, superior and inferior, because it identifies itself with them. It gives up this self-identification with the body in due course as the result of exercising the power of discrimination. Only so long as the soul thus identifies itself with the subtle body from attachment, does action bind it. It transfers to itself the properties of the body and experiences sorrow and suffering. But it is *Māyā* that beguiles it into identifying itself with the fortunes of the body. The obsession that makes one think and speak of the *guṇas* (such as

joys and sorrows) as real, is founded in error. Everything that can be grasped by the senses is illusory, like the experiences that one has in a dream or a reverie. Therefore, those who know both the real (the *Ātman*) and the unreal (the body), do not grieve for the one or the other. If there are men who, knowing this, still grieve, it is because it is exceedingly difficult to change men's dispositions (36-49).

'There was a fowler in a forest, at whose hands fate had decreed the death of birds. He spread his nets at various places, enticing the birds with baits. A pair of fan-tailed shrikes drifted there, and the female immediately fell to the lure of the fowler's bait. Constrained by fate, she got entangled in the snare. Seeing her life imperilled, and himself unable, because of his weakness, to release her, her loving mate was grief-stricken, and he made lament. "Alas, how pitiless is God! What will He, Who has all power, gain by taking this miserable thing, who sorrows for me, her helpless mate, and who deserves the pity of all men? Let Him take me too; why should I live a widower's unhappy life, with this miserable half of my body that is left to me? How shall I rear the motherless unfledged chicks in the nest? My unfortunate younglings are eagerly waiting for their mother there." Hearing the shrike thus wailing nearby, distraught by the loss of his beloved, his throat choked with tears, the same fowler, instigated by fate, struck him down with an arrow from under cover and killed him. And, you stupid folk, who mourn for your lord, not realizing the peril you are yourselves in, will not recover him even if you grieve for a hundred years' (50-57).

Hiranyakaśipu concluded the tale by saying, 'When the child had thus spoken out, the astonished relations realized that everything was an ephemeral and illusive phenomenon. And Yama, having spoken, vanished instantly. Then Suyajna's kin did the customary obsequial rites. Therefore you should not grieve for yourselves or for another. But for the ignorance which is the cause of the obsession with notions of "me" and "not-me", who or what in this transmigratory flux, in which all mortals are caught, can be properly spoken of as "I" or "not-I", "mine" or "not-mine"? (58-61).

CHAPTER III

HIRANYAKASIPU'S AUSTERITIES

Nārada said: Hiranyakaśipu, O King, wanted to make himself invincible and exempt from old age and death and to become sole ruler of the earth without a rival. He practised extraordinarily severe austerities in the valley of the Mandara mountain. Standing on his great toes, with his arms stretched upwards, and his eyes fixed on the sky, he blazed with the brilliance of his matted locks, like the sun at the hour of the world's ending. While he was thus doing penance, the gods went back to their places. From his head broke out the smoky fire caused by his austerities ; and spreading on all sides it burnt the worlds above, below and all around the earth. The rivers and the seas were in a turmoil ; the earth with its island continents and mountains shook ; the stars and the planets tumbled down, and the world was ablaze in all the ten directions. The gods, scorched by that fire, left heaven and went to the Brahmaloka ; and they respectfully appealed to the Creator, saying, ' O God of gods, O Master of the worlds, we are unable to stay in heaven, being scorched by the austerities of the chief of the Daityas. Be pleased to put an end to them, if that seems proper to Thee, before the worlds which offer Thee worship perish, O Lord That art perfect, and the supreme master of the worlds. We shall tell Thee what he has in view, practising these difficult austerities, though of course Thou wilt know without our telling. " Having created the worlds of the moving and the non-moving by the constant practice of austerities and yoga, the Overlord of the creators (Brahmā) occupies his position, which is above all others. I shall secure that position for myself (some day) by similar constancy in the pursuit of austerities and yoga, intensifying my efforts, the *Ātman* being eternal and time everlasting. I shall, by my strength, turn the old order topsyturvy and establish a new dispensation, its opposite. How little worth while are other positions, like that of Vishnu (the Pole Star), which are destroyed by time when the Kalpa ends ! " This, we have heard, is his

fixed resolve in launching upon these severe austerities. Therefore be pleased forthwith to do whatever seems proper to Thee, O Lord of the three worlds. Thy supremacy, O Master of the worlds, makes for the prosperity of the world of Brahmanas and cows, its happiness, opulence, security and triumph' (1-13).

Thus petitioned by the gods, the exalted Lord, the Self-created Brahmā, went to the hermitage of the Chief of the Daityas accompanied by Bhṛgu, Dakṣha and others, O King. At first he could not see him, who was completely hidden under a tangle of ant-hills, grasses and bamboos. Descrying him who, hidden like the sun behind the clouds, was scorching the worlds by his austerities, though his fat, skin, flesh and blood had been eaten up by ants, the Lord Who rides on the swan was astonished. And He smiled as He spoke to him (14-16).

Brahmā said, 'Get up, do, may all be well with you; your austerities have been crowned with success, O son of Kaśyapa. I am here, the granter of boons. Ask for anything you want. I have seen for myself your marvellous courage, your body having been eaten up by mosquitoes and other insects; your life has retreated into your bones. That is something which no sage accomplished in the past; nor is anyone likely to do it in the future. Who can live for a hundred celestial years without taking a drop of water? You would have won me over, O son of Diti, by the mere resolve to launch on this enterprise, which would have deterred even those who have established control over their minds; and your steadfast perseverance in these austerities has impressed me even more in your favour. I shall grant you all your desires, O foremost of Asuras. Having been granted sight of me, an immortal, you, mortal though you are, should not go without your reward' (17-21).

Nārada said: Having said this, the God, the First-born of the gods, sprinkled on his body, eaten up by the ants, the celestial water from his pot, whose potency was infinite. He forthwith emerged from the ant-hill overgrown with bamboos, like fire from firewood, as a youth endowed with abundant mental vigour, bodily strength and vital energy, with a frame of adamant.

hardness and a complexion like molten gold. Seeing the Lord on his swan-mount poised in the air, he bowed low, touching the ground with his head, his heart full of joy at the sight. Then, getting up, he looked at the all-powerful Lord, his hair standing on end, and with joined palms extolled him in all humility in faltering words (22-25).

Hiranyakasipu said: 'Salutations to the Almighty and Supreme Lord, the Self-luminous, and the Support of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, Who when the world lies engulfed in the intense darkness of Tamas caused by time at the end of the Kalpa, manifests the universe again by His own will, utilizing the three *guṇas* of Prakṛti, and creates, protects and destroys it. Salutations to Him, the Primordial Lord, the First Cause, the embodiment of consciousness and knowledge of the objective world, Who manifests Himself as the world of cause and effect through those modifications of the *guṇas*, the vital breath, the organs of both kinds, the mind and the intellect. Thou Thyself controllest the world of the moving and the non-moving, functioning as the chief vital breath (the Sūtrātman). Thou art the Ruler of all creatures, of their will (*chitta*), their consciousness, their minds and their senses, and art therefore supremely great. And Thou art, too, the Controller of the elements, their characteristics, the inner organ and the residual impressions of past Karma. Thou, in the form of the three Vedas, hast propagated the seven sacrifices by elaborating the ritual in which four priests officiate, and the meditations connected therewith. Thou art the Soul and the Inner Ruler in all creatures, being omniscient, infinite, impartite, and without beginning or end. Thou Thyself art, too, the unwinking destroyer time, working imperceptibly through fractions of time such as an instant, and wearing out the lives of all creatures. But Thou art Thyself immutable, being the Ātman (which is pure *jñāna*) as well as the Overlord of all creatures, unborn, limitless. And Thou art, too, the Inner Ruler and Sustainer of all creatures. There is nothing other than Thee, neither cause nor effect, neither moving nor non-moving. The Vedas, the Sāstras and the ancillary lores are all Thy bodies, for Thou art the Brahma (the

all-comprehending Vast) in Whose womb was the golden cosmic egg, and Thou transcendest Prakṛti, composed of the three *guṇas*. The physical world, which is Thy body, has been created by Thee as the medium through which Thou couldst experience the objects apprehended by the organs, the vital airs and the mind, even while Thou remainest entrenched in Thy position of unshaken supremacy. Therefore Thou art the unconditioned Brahma as well as the Primordial Puruṣha. O infinite and exalted Lord, I make my salutations to Thee That pervadest the universe with Thy presence, which baffles mind and speech, and commandest all knowledge and all the powers of Māyā (26-34).

‘If Thou wouldst grant me the boons I desire, O supreme giver of boons, let me not die at the hands of any being created by Thee. Neither within doors nor out of doors, neither by day nor by night, neither through those who are created by others than Thee, nor by means of weapons; neither on the earth nor in the air; neither from men nor from beasts; neither from the inanimate nor from the animate; neither from the gods nor from the Asuras, and great Uragas, shall death come to me. Let there be none who could stand up to me in battle, and let me be the sole monarch of all living beings, and like Thee unique in my greatness among the Guardians of the worlds, and let me enjoy those supernatural powers which are the meed of supreme austerities and yoga, and which never diminish’ (35-38).

CHAPTER IV

HIRANYAKASIPU OPPRESSES THE WORLD

Sri Nārada said: Thus begged, Brahmā, being pleased with his austerities, granted Hiraṇyakaśipu the boons he sought, extremely difficult to obtain though they were. Brahmā told him, ‘These boons that you crave of me, my child, are exceedingly difficult to get; but even though it is so, I shall grant them to you, my dear.’ And the all-powerful Lord, whose blessings can never go in vain, received the worship of the first of the Asuras, and went away, hearing the Patriarchs sing

his praises. The Daitya, having got his boon, came to possess a body that shone like gold ; and brooding always on the death of his brother, he harboured enmity in his mind against the Lord (Vishṇu). The great Asura achieved world-conquest by his victory over the three worlds and all the quarters, and subdued and brought under his control the gods, the Asuras, the kings of men, the Gandharvas, the eagles, the serpents, the Siddhas, the Chāraṇas, the Vidyādharas, the sages, the chiefs of the manes, the Manus, the rulers of the Yakshas and the Rākshasas, the ghouls, and the spirits of the dead and the elementals, in fact all who lorded it over their kind. And he captured the seats of the Guardians of the worlds, and deprived them of their power. He occupied heaven, with its sumptuous pleasure garden (Nandana). And he took his residence in the palace of Mahendra himself, which Viśvakarmā had fashioned, and which housed the wealth of the three worlds, being filled with every abundance. In that mansion were terraces of coral and floors of emerald, walls of crystal and rows of pillars made of cat's-eye, canopies of curious workmanship and seats of ruby, beds white as the froth on milk, hung with ropes of pearl. Beautiful goddesses with lovely teeth, whose anklets tinkled as they moved about, saw the reflection of their lovely faces in the gem-encrusted floors. In that mansion of Mahendra, he of the tremendous strength and inflexible will, having vanquished all foes and become sole ruler of all the world, diverted himself, the oppressed gods and others abasing themselves at his feet, while he inflicted draconian punishment. All the Guardians of the worlds, with the exception only of the Trinity of Great Gods, waited with presents in their hands, upon him in whom were gathered the fruit of austerities and yoga, and all strength and energy, as he, drunk with foul-smelling liquor, sat there with his blood-red eyes rolling, my dear. As he occupied the throne of Mahendra, which he had wrested from him by main force, Viśvāvasu, Tumburu and others like us, Gandharvas and Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Apsarases, sang, and the sages extolled him, O scion of the Pāṇdus. Propitiated by those who were subject to the discipline of *varṇa* and *āśrama* with sacrifices in which

ample fees were paid, he appropriated the sacrificial oblations to himself. Under him the earth with its seven island continents yielded its fruits abundantly without being tilled, the heavens showered all that the heart desired, the upper air exhibited every kind of wonder. The oceans of salt, liquor, clarified butter, cane-juice, whey, milk and water, along with their 'spouses' (the rivers), brought him great hoards of gems on the crests of their waves. The mountains provided him with playgrounds in their valleys, the trees, fruits and flowers in all seasons; and by himself he wielded the powers of all the Guardians of the worlds. Having thus conquered all the quarters, and established himself as sole monarch, he enjoyed all the pleasures that he fancied, but not having controlled his senses, he found no satisfaction in them (1-19).

As he, who had incurred the curse of the Brahmanas, thus lived and ruled, violating the restraints imposed by the Sāstras, in his intoxication with power and pride, a very long time passed. All the worlds and their Guardians, terrorized by his draconian rule, threw themselves on the mercy of Achyuta, finding no other succour. 'Salutations to that quarter where is to be found the Supreme Lord Hari, the Soul in all creatures; having reached which the ascetics, who are pure of heart, find a haven of peace, from which they do not return.' With this prayer in their hearts and concentrated attention, they meditated on Hṛshikeśa, restraining their senses, abjuring sleep and sustaining themselves on air. They heard a disembodied voice, like the rumbling of clouds, making the four quarters reverberate. It brought assurance of safety to all good souls, with the words, 'Fear not, great gods, may all be well with you. Seeing (or hearing) of Me is the harbinger of all good. I know the wickedness of this worthless son of Diti. I shall slay him; hold yourselves in patience for a while. When a mortal begins to hate the gods, the Vedas, the cows, the Brahmanas and the saintly, and to set himself up against Dharma and Me, it will not be long before he perishes. When he (Hiranyakaśipu) begins persecuting his son, the high-souled Prāhāda, who is totally free from feelings of enmity and is estab-

lished in tranquillity, then I shall destroy him, however strong he may be by virtue of the boon granted him' (20-28).

Nārada said : Thus told by the Master of the worlds, the gods were freed from fear ; they made their prostrations to Him and went back, assured in their minds that the Asura was as good as dead. The Ruler of the Daityas had four sons endowed with marvellous qualities, and Prahārāda was the greatest of them all by reason of his virtues. He was ever zealous in the service of the saintly, and devoted to the Brahmanas. He was of an exemplary conduct, true to his word and self-controlled. He possessed uniquely, as their own soul does, the love of all creatures, and lavished likewise his own love and care on them. He bowed at the feet of the noble-minded like a servant; he loved the humble like a father ; he was affectionate as a brother towards his equals, and he looked on his Gurus as his God. Though he excelled by his learning, wealth, good looks and high birth, he was totally without haughtiness or pride. He did not quail or wilt under grief. Neither did he hanker after pleasures that could be had here or elsewhere ; for he regarded them as illusory. He had controlled his senses, breath, body and mind, and was wholly free from the failings and vices of the Asuras. Though an Asura born, all desire was stilled in him. Men of wisdom have lauded time and again the stirring virtues of the devotees of the Lord which they found in him—virtues the memory of which has not been blotted out by time, but which are remembered to this day, O King, even as the glorious qualities of the exalted Lord are. It is him whom even the gods, though enemies, put forward as an exemplar when the talk turns on saintly souls. What wonder, then, that others like you should extol him ? (29-35).

It is impossible to catalogue his virtues, because they are endless. What is attempted here is but a bare indication of the greatness of him whose heart delighted naturally in the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. Even as a child he neglected his toys, and in his total absorption in the Lord, he seemed to the world like a mindless dolt. Possessed by Krishna as it were, he was wholly unaware of the world about him. Sitting in one place, or walking

about, or eating, lying down, drinking or talking, he never noticed what he was doing, folded in the embrace of Govinda. Sometimes he would weep, his mind in a fever of agitation, as he thought of the Lord of Vaikuntha; anon, he would laugh, his remembrance of Him bringing him joy. Sometimes he would sing at the top of his voice, sometimes call out to him in yearning and dance in delight, untroubled by bashfulness. There were times when he was so full of his love for Him that he submerged his identity in Him and acted in imitation of His ways, wholly forgetful of himself. Sometimes he thrilled to His presence, his hair standing on end, and he sat still, supremely content, with his half-closed eyes full of the tears of bliss his staunch love brought him. He not only found the utmost happiness in worshipping the feet of the illustrious Lord, which was the guerdon of association with those who had abjured all possessions; he brought peace to the minds of others also, who were miserable by reason of evil associations. Towards this great devotee of the Lord, who was supremely blest in the loftiness of his soul, and who was his own son, Hiranyakaśipu was guilty of cruelty, O King (36-43).

Yudhishtira said, 'I should like to know, O godly sage, who are firm in your vows, how the father could be so unnaturally cruel to his own son, who was pure and saintly. Fathers who love their children chide them if they are rebellious, in order to correct them; they do not treat them harshly like an enemy. Much less would they do that to those sons who are so good and loyal to them, looking upon their elders as their God. What bewilders us is that the hatred of the father for the son should have gone so far as to induce him to inflict death on him; please enlighten us, O capable one' (44-46).

CHAPTER V

HIRANYAKASIPU SEEKS TO KILL HIS SON

Nārada said : You know that the blessed sage Kāvya (Sukra) was requested by the Asuras to be their Chief Priest. His sons Sanda and Amarka lived near the

residence of the King of the Daityas. The King's young son Prahrāda, who was a skilled reasoner, was placed under them. And they taught him, as well as other Asura children, the subjects that had to be studied. He (Prahrāda) heard what the teacher expounded, and repeated it after him, but he did not regard that teaching as sound, because it was founded on the obsession, based on a fundamental illusion, that one man is a friend and another an enemy. Once the King of the Daityas, placing his son on his lap, told him, 'Tell me, my child, what it is that you regard as good.' Prahrāda replied, 'To my mind, O Chief of the Daityas, it is good for mortals, who are always plunged in despondency by reason of their infatuation with what they falsely regard as "me" and "mine", to escape falling into that blind well, the home, by going to the forest, there to take refuge in Hari' (1-5).

Nārada said: Hearing those words of his son, which showed his rooted faith in (Vishnu) the partisan of the enemy, the Daitya laughed and said, 'Children's minds are perverted by those who side with the enemy. Let the child be properly looked after in the Guru's household, so that Brahmanas, who are the concealed partisans of Vishnu, do not put wrong notions into his head' (6-7).

When Prahrāda had been brought back to their home, the family priests of the Daityas spoke him fair, praised him and questioned him in all friendliness. 'Prahrāda, my child, may all be well with you. Now, tell us truly, do not fib; how did you alone of all the children come to cultivate this perversity? Were these pernicious ideas put into your head by somebody else, or did they occur of themselves? Come, tell us, your teachers, O Delight of your race; we are eager to know' (8-10).

Prahrāda said in answer, 'Salutations to the exalted Lord, by Whose Māyā men cling to false notions, looking upon some as 'friend' and others as 'enemy', notions that are to be seen only in those who are confounded by that Māyā. When He is propitious, men's minds are delivered from the animal-like lack of discrimination deriving from the illusion of difference which makes one think, 'He is not me; and I am not he;

we are different.' Stupid men speak of the Paramātmā Himself as friend or foe ; which is no matter for wonder, seeing that even Brahmā and other masters of Vedic lore are baffled in their efforts to follow His inscrutable ways. It is He Who has unsettled my mind ! As in the presence of the magnet a piece of iron moves of its own accord, so in the presence of the Wielder of the Discus my mind underwent a profound change, by what cause I know not ' (11-14).

Nārada said : Having said this much to the Brahmana, the sagacious one was silent. It made the poor servant of the King angry. He called out, ' Ho, there, fetch me a cane. He will bring discredit upon us. This foolish child is the fire-brand born to destroy his race ; what is indicated for him is the fourth expedient, chastisement. In that forest of sandal-wood trees, the progeny of Diti, is sprung up this thorn tree. This child has been cast for the role of handle to the axe, Vishnu, that will cut down that forest.' Trying to frighten him by using threats and in other ways, he taught him the Sāstra that deals with the three ends of life (15-18).

Once the teacher, being satisfied that he (Prahārāda) was proficient in all the four expedients taught by the science of polity, took him to the King of the Daityas, after his mother had rubbed his body with unguents, bathed and adorned him. The Asura blessed the child, who threw himself down at his feet, and holding him in a long embrace, was supremely happy. Placing him on his lap, kissing him on the crown, and wetting with his tears his beaming face, he spoke to him, O Yudhishtira. Hiranyakaśipu said, ' Prahārāda, my child, may you live long. Tell me something of value that you have been taught by your teacher and mastered thoroughly in all these long years you have been with him.' Prahārāda replied, ' To hear of the glories of Vishnu, to praise them, to be absorbed in thoughts of Him, to wait upon Him, to worship Him, to make one's prostrations to Him, to be His dedicated servant, to look upon oneself as His friend, and to surrender oneself into His hands—if devotion to the Lord, which manifests itself in these nine ways, were taught to the pupil, and he gave his

disinterested devotion to the Lord even before he began expressing it in these various ways, that would indeed be the highest kind of learning' (19-24).

On hearing what his son said, Hiranyakaśipu told his Guru's son, his lip trembling in anger, 'How dare you, you unworthy Brahmana, basely working for the enemy, teach the child such worthless things, with scant regard for me, you stupid creature? There are wicked men in the world, who wear the false mask of friendship. Their treachery is exposed only in course of time, like those diseases that afflict men who have been guilty of monstrous sins' (25-27).

The son of his preceptor replied, 'Neither I nor any one else taught your son what he says, O foe of Indra. It comes naturally to him, O King. Restrain your anger, you must not charge us with a damnable crime' Nārada said: 'Thus told by his Guru's son, the Asura asked his son, 'If you did not imbibe these pernicious notions from your teacher, you unlucky fool, where did you pick them up?' (28-29).

Prahrāda told him, 'The minds of men who are absorbed in the domestic life are never drawn to Krishna either by their own volition or by the promptings of others or by mutual influence. Their undisciplined senses involve them in *samsāra*, where they are content to chew the thrice-chewed cud. Those men whose minds hanker after pleasure cannot possibly know Vishnu, Who is sought by those who look upon Him as the supreme goal of life. Looking for guidance to those who seek all satisfaction in the external world, they behave like blind men led by the blind, held in bondage to the commandments of the Veda, according to their competence, through the performance of *karmas* prompted by desire (like cattle controlled by a long rope to which they are attached by tether-ropes). So long as these men do not receive on their heads the dust of the feet of those supremely great ones who have abjured all worldly possessions, their minds will not be impelled to devotion to the feet of the Lord of the mighty exploits, which brings freedom from *samsāra*' (30-32).

When his son, having said this, was silent, Hiranyakaśipu, blinded by anger, threw him down from his lap.

Deluged by annoyance and indignation, his eyes blood-red, he shouted, 'Kill him instantly, he deserves death. Take him away, you Rākshasas. He is my brother's slayer; for he, the vilest of vile creatures, abandoning his own kin, worships like a slave at the feet of Vishnu, who killed his uncle. And what good will he do even to Vishnu, seeing that he unnaturally discarded, even as a five-year-old child, that affection for one's parents which it is so difficult to give up? That man should be looked upon as one's son who, though no relation, does one good like medicine; while the son born of one's loins should be treated like a disease, if he turns hostile. Even if one of your own limbs should do you an injury, you should cut it off, since by its severance the rest will be saved. As he is an enemy in the guise of a friend, like the unruly sense of the ascetic which lures him into evil, he should be slain by any expedient that offers—whether through the food he takes, or when he is sleeping or sitting still' (33-35).

Thus ordered by their master, the Rākshasas with sharp teeth, fierce mouth and red hair and beard, uttered piercing yells, and shouting, 'Chop him up, tear him to pieces', they attacked him with the spears with which they were armed, in all vital parts as he sat there. But those attacks were futile like even the most strenuous endeavours of the ungodly, since they were directed against one whose mind was concentrated on the transcendent Lord of the endless puissance, the Inner Controller in all that exists, the immutable Brahma That baffles definition. When these attempts were unavailing, the King of the Daityas became a prey to doubts and misgivings and resorted to the most desperate expedients to kill him, O Yudhishtira. When the Asura found it impossible to kill his innocent son by setting the elephants of the quarters upon him, and serpents to bite him, by employing black magic against him, by hurling him down from steep precipices, by the delusive magic practised by Asuras, by immuring him in pits, by poison and starvation, by snow and wind, by fire and water, and by crushing him under big rocks, and he could think of no other way by which he could effect his purpose, he reflected despondently, 'I have

used very harsh words against him and tried many expedients to kill him. But from every cruel and wicked assault he has been saved by his own puissance. Though he remains near me and is yet a child, he is fearless and able to take care of himself; and like Śunahśepa, he will never forget the wrongs done to him. He is immeasurably great, he knows no fear, and he is immortal. Without a doubt, I shall die because I have made an enemy of him, or I shall not die at all' (39-47).

As he sat hanging down his head, his face shadowed by anxiety, Sanda and Amarka, the sons of Uśanas, spoke to him in private. 'You have conquered the three worlds single-handed, their Guardians cowed by the mere raising of your eyebrows. We can see, my Lord, no reason why you should worry. The conduct of children should not be taken too seriously and judged as good or bad. Bind the child with the noose of Varuṇa and keep him till the return of our Guru, the blessed scion of the Bhṛgu, so that he may not run away in a fright. Age, and service to respected elders, should correct these eccentricities' (49-50).

Approving what they said, he (Hiranyakaśipu) told them, 'Let him be taught the Dharmas that are incumbent on kings living the householder's life.' They accordingly taught Prahrāda all about Dharma, Artha and Kāma methodically, and he received their teachings with modesty and humility, O King. But though they taught him the Dharma bearing on the three ends of life in its pure form, he did not regard it as sound. Nor did he set much store by their teaching, since it was imparted by men who were themselves not free from likes and dislikes in their attitude to the world. When the teacher was once called away by his domestic duties, he (Prahrāda) was asked by the children, his playmates of the same age, to join them, as they had time on their hands. But the exceedingly wise one smilingly invited them to hear him, being moved by compassion for the common lot of mortals who move between life and death; and he addressed them in appealing words. Because of the respect in which they held him, those children, whose minds had not been vitiated by the promptings of likes and dislikes and the activities result-

ing therefrom, abandoned their playthings and came and sat round him, great King, their hearts and their eyes fixed on him. And the Asura, the great devotee of the Lord, moved by loving kindness and fellow-feeling, addressed them as follows (51-57).

CHAPTER VI

PRAHRĀDA'S ADVICE TO CHILDREN

Prahrāda said : The wise man should practise in this very life, even from childhood, the *Dharmas* that induce devotion to the Lord. For birth as a human being is rarely achieved, and life is fleeting ; but it may be the means to all good. The one object in life should be the worship of the feet of the Lord Vishnu, since He is the soul in all creatures and dear to them, as well as being their Ruler and bosom friend. The pleasures of life, like the pains, are obtained without any special effort by all who are born with a body, whatever it may be and as a consequence of it, since they are the result of one's own doings in former lives. No effort for the sake of pleasure should be made ; for that would be merely a waste of life, and would not bring one the supreme felicity from devotion to Mukunda's lotus feet. Therefore, the capable man, who finds himself caught in the vortex of *samsāra*, should strive to secure his eternal welfare, while life lasts and his powers and faculties are unimpaired. A hundred years is the span of human life. For the man who has not controlled his senses, one half of it is of no use, since he lies lapped in slumber in the darkness of night. Twenty years pass in the ignorance of childhood and in the pastimes of youth, and another twenty in the helplessness of old age. He who is careless of his own eternal welfare fritters away the rest of his life in his addiction to domesticity from the hankering after pleasures which involve all sorts of difficulty and suffering, and from overwhelming infatuation. Where can you find a man who, without controlling his mind, can make a determined effort to free himself from his

attachment to his home, held as he is by the strong bonds of affection? Who is there who would give up his wealth, which is coveted even more than life, and for which men are prepared to throw away their lives by taking to stealing, fighting for pay, or trading? Dwelling with pleasure on his secret concourse with his loving and solicitous wife, and her heart-warming talk; cherishing the ties of affection that bind him to his friends and to his young children with their artless, charming prattle; thinking fondly of his (grown-up) sons, his dearly loved daughters, his brothers and sisters, and his parents who need his sympathy and support; remembering his houses with their many delightful conveniences, his hereditary occupations, which provide him with ample means, his cattle and servants; working like the silk-worm in his ceaseless desire prompted by greed, and prizing the exhaustless attraction which the pleasures of sex and the palate have for him; how could he be expected to abjure those attachments, or become disgusted with life, when his infatuation is so complete? The heedless man does not realize that in his preoccupation with the support of his family, his life is fast ebbing away, and he is depriving himself of the prospect of gaining the supreme end of life. Though he suffers grievously at every turn under the stress of the three kinds of misery, he does not turn away in disgust from the domestic life, because of its endless lure for him. Constantly hankering after wealth, since he knows no self-control and his desires are not easily sated, he robs others of their possessions, though he fully knows the penalties here and hereafter. Entertaining as he does the notion of difference, and thinking in terms of 'mine' and 'another's', he, in his absorption with his family, is unable to devote any thought to the Self, but clings to his infatuation like an ignorant man, however learned he may be, O Asuras. Since there is no man anywhere who is able to free himself from his pitiful subjection as the pet monkey of woman, whose glance signals desire and to whom he is bound by the fetters of progeny, you should, O Daityas, forgo all association with your fellows, whose heart is in pleasure, and seek refuge in Narayana, the First Cause. He is the libera-

tion that those who have renounced all attachments are eager to attain (1-18).

'He who wishes to propitiate Achyuta has no difficult task, O Asura children, since He is the Soul in all creatures and is present everywhere. In all living creatures from Brahmā down to the immobile creation, in all material objects, in the gross elements, in the *guṇas*, in Prakṛti, their state of equilibrium, and in the entities evolved from the disturbance thereof (such as the Mahat, the ego, and so on), there is only one Soul, the Brahma and Paramātmān, the exalted Lord, supreme and immutable. While He in truth baffles definition and is Himself undifferentiated, being the transcendent Lord Who is pure consciousness and bliss, His supremacy is veiled by Māyā, who creates the worlds through the *guṇas*, and He is made to appear as if He could be defined on the one hand as the soul within, the pervasive experiencer, and on the other hand, as the objective world of experience (19-23).

'You should show compassion to, or cultivate friendship with all creatures, as the case may be, ridding yourselves of the *āsuric* mentality; that will be pleasing to Adhokshaja. When the Lord Ananta, the First Cause, is pleased with one, what can he not get? What should he gain by Dharma and other such things, which are obtained in this life without any special effort, as the result of actions done in past lives? And what shall we, who savour the sweetness of His feet, and sing them, want even *moksha* for? The entire Vedic teaching about the three ends of life, Dharma, Artha and Kāma, and the means to their realization taught in the Sāstras that impart knowledge of the Self or deal with the practice of rituals, the arts of logic and government; and the various occupations by which men earn their livelihood—all these would, to my mind, be true only if they led one to dedicate oneself to the Supreme Lord, the Inner Ruler. This pure knowledge, which it is exceedingly difficult to attain, was imparted by Nārāyaṇa, the Companion of Nara, to Nārada. It is available to all who have bathed in the dust of the feet of those who give their devotion wholly to the Lord and abjure all possessions. It was from Nārada, who

has direct knowledge of the Lord, that I got this knowledge which found its culmination in experience, as well as the immaculate Dharma of devotion to the Lord' (24-28).

The Daitya children said, 'You and we, O Prahrāda, know no teacher other than these two, the sons of our Guru, who have been in authority over us since our infancy. A child who is still in the women's apartments is hardly likely to come into contact with the saintly. Clear this doubt, friend, if you can, by adducing cogent reasons why we should believe you' (29-30).

CHAPTER VII

PRAHRĀDA ON THE SELF

Nārada said : Hearing what the sons of the Daityas said, that great devotee of the Lord, the Asura, smiled, as he remembered what he had heard me saying, and he thus addressed them. Prahrāda said, 'When our father had left for the Mandara mountain to practise austerities, the gods, Vāsava and others, made an all-out effort to wage war against the Dānavas, saying, "God be thanked, the oppressor of the worlds has been eaten each up by his own sins, like the serpent by ants". Seeing them massing great armies, and being harried by them, the chiefs of the Asura hosts were terrified, and they fled in all directions, intent only on saving their lives, and with no thought for what might happen to their wives, children, friends and allies, or their homes, cattle and other belongings. The gods, keen on victory, looted and ruined the King's palace. And Indra seized the King's consort, my mother. The celestial sage, who happened to go there, saw her as she was being led away, trembling in fear and weeping like a female osprey. And he dissuaded Indra, telling him, "You, O Ruler of the gods, should not carry off this innocent woman. Release her instantly, O fortunate one. She is a chaste woman, and another man's wife." Indra replied, "She bears in her womb a child of the foe of the gods, who will be irresistible in his might. I will

detain her till she brings forth her child, and release her when I have accomplished my purpose." Nārada told him, "The child in her womb is sinless. And he is a great devotee of the Lord and mighty in himself. He, the follower of Ananta, is exceedingly strong, and he will not die at your hands". Thus told, Indra let her go, showing respect to the words of the celestial sage, and returned to heaven, after reverently circum-ambulating her because of his devotion to him who is dear to Ananta. The sage took our mother to his own hermitage, telling her reassuringly, "You shall live here, my daughter, till your husband's return". And she agreed and lived untroubled by fear, under the protection of the celestial sage, so long as the Lord of the Daityas was absent, engaged in his terrible austerities. The faithful wife, who was with child, served the sage with all devotion for the well-being of her child and from the desire that he might be born when she wished it. The compassionate sage, having the capacity to do it, imparted to her both the devotion to the Lord which is the heart of Dharma, and the pure knowledge of the Self; he intended that teaching for my benefit also. My mother forgot it, being a woman, and because it all happened so long ago. But the memory of it still abides with me, thanks to the blessing the sage had vouchsafed me. If you have faith in my words, such knowledge and devotion may be yours too. For faith may confer on women and children, even as it did on me, the power of discriminating wisdom (1-17).

'The six stages of life, beginning with birth, are regarded by the wise as affecting the body, not the soul, through the operation of time, which embodies the power to effect all changes, even as the fruit is subject to various changes (while the tree remains unaffected). The *Ātman* is eternal, immutable and pure. It is the One without a second; It is the Witness within the body, and the Support of all that is; It is changeless and self-luminous; It is the Cause of all that is; It is all-pervasive, unattached and uncircumscribed by aught else. Distinguishing the *Ātman* from the body by these twelve unique and supereminent characteristics, which it possesses, one should abjure the illusory notions of

"me" and "mine" in regard to the body, and so on, produced by ignorance. Just as the goldsmith extracts gold from the ore by suitably processing it, the man who knows the complex of cause and effect (the body), ruled by the *Ātman*, gains direct experience of the *Brahma* by methods that are efficacious for realizing the *Ātman* (18-21).

'The number of primary entities is eight. The three *guṇas* are but the constituents of *Prakṛti*. The teachers have spoken of the modifications of *Prakṛti* as sixteen in number; while the *Puruṣa* (*Ātman*) is one, being connected with the others (as Witness). The body is a complex of all these entities, and is of two kinds, the moving and the non-moving. And within the body itself the *Puruṣa* may be identified, by eliminating all those things that are not the *Puruṣa*, by men whose minds have been trained to investigate with all due care the meaning of the Vedic texts bearing upon such phenomena as the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, applying the logical principle of concomitance in affirmation and negation. To illustrate, the three stages of waking, dream and sleep pertain to the intellect. The experiencer of all these states is the individual soul, the *jīva*. He is the witness in the body, and is different from it. Negating these states of the intellect, which are of the nature of the three *guṇas* and are the product of *karma*, as unreal, one should be able to distinguish the essential nature of the Self from these states with which it is associated, as one distinguishes between the wind and the scents that it carries. The transmigratory flux arises from, and is perpetuated by the *guṇas* and by the actions which they prompt. And so, though it has its roots in nescience and has no intrinsic reality, it appears real, like objects seen in a dream (22-27).

'Therefore you should burn up the seeds of *karma*, the product of the *guṇas*. This is called yoga. It arrests and stops the constant flux to which the intellect is subject. Of the thousand ways in which this may be done, the Lord has singled out for prescription the practice of those *Dharmas* by means of which true devotion to the Supreme Lord may be easily engendered.

Among such Dharmas are service to the Guru, loving devotion to him, the handing over to him of whatever one gets ; association with the devotees of the Lord, who are of exemplary conduct ; worship of the Lord ; devout attention to discourses on Him ; the singing of His virtues and exploits ; meditation on His lotus feet ; reverently gazing on and worshipping His image. Bearing in mind always the fact that the exalted Lord Hari is present in all creatures as the Inner Ruler, one should appropriately honour them by satisfying their desires. In this manner men who have won control over the senses and the mind, cultivate that devotion to the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva which culminates in love for Him. When a man, hearing of the great doings, the incomparable virtues of the Lord and the marvels accomplished by Him in the various incarnations made by Him in play, is filled with the intense joy that thrills the body, brings tears to the eyes and makes the voice falter, and he sings aloud, or moans, or dances ; when he, like one possessed, laughs sometimes and then weeps and falls to musing on the Lord, makes his prostrations to those about him and, fetching a deep sigh, calls aloud, all intent on the Self and without the least shame, 'O Hari, Lord of the worlds, O Narayana!' ; then indeed he attains Adhokshaja, freed from all bondage, his mind and body patterned after the Lord's by imaginative identification with every gesture of His, his ignorance burnt up by the overwhelming power of devotion. Wise men have regarded the mind's reaching out to Adhokshaja as having itself the power to free from the cycle of birth and death even those mortals whose minds are impure, if these minds have managed to contact Him ; and such contact itself is regarded by them as being the bliss of merging in the Brahma. Therefore worship in your hearts the Lord Who is the Inner Ruler. How can there be any difficulty, O Asura children, in the worship of Hari Who abides in the heart like the Void therein and Who is the essential Self of the *jīva*, and his well-wisher ? What use really are those objects of enjoyment, which every creature runs after madly ? Riches, wife, cattle, children and other relations, houses, land, elephants, treasure-

houses, and all the accessories of luxurious living, the things that men desire—what satisfaction can these fleeting things bring to the man who is here today, gone tomorrow? Likewise the other worlds that are earned by the offering of sacrifices are transient, vitiated by inequalities, and calculated to disturb the mind with evil thoughts. Therefore you should worship the Supreme Lord in Whom no flaw has ever been found or heard of, in order that you may realize the Self (22-40).

‘The man who, thinking himself wise, repeatedly does actions with a view to achieving a desired end, reaps without fail results that are the exact contrary. The man who does anything does so from the desire to be happy and to be freed from misery; but while he was happy when he did not desire anything, he is now in for nothing but unhappiness due to his craving. The body, for the sake of which a man strives to win objects of enjoyment by the performance of rituals prompted by desires, is itself the property of others, and perishable. How much more so are those things that are apart from the body, such as a man’s son, wife, house, wealth, kingdom, treasure, elephants, ministers, servants and allies, towards all of whom he exhibits an attitude of possessiveness? To the *Ātman*, that ocean of bliss eternal, what use can these trivial things be, which perish with the body and can do no good, though seemingly objects of desire? And consider this, O Asuras; what shall it profit a man to busy himself with works when (as the result of *karmas* done in past lives) he finds nothing but suffering in all stages of his journey through the world from the moment his mother conceived him? A man does actions with the body which obeys him. And as the fruit of his actions, he gets a body again—both of them the result of his lack of wisdom. Therefore, giving up all desire, worship Hari, the Supreme Lord, your own Self, Who is free from all desire and on Whose pleasure are dependent the obtaining of wealth, the enjoyment of pleasures, and the garnering of Dharma. Hari is the Soul and the Inner Ruler, as well as their best beloved, and the Overlord and Controller of all beings, whose bodies have been fashioned by the gross elements of His own creation.

Whoever worships the feet of Mukunda—be he god, Asura, man, Yaksha, Gandharva—shall attain blessedness even like me. The status of the twice-born, of a god or of a sage is not sufficient for the propitiation of Hari, O Asura children; no, nor exemplary conduct, extensive learning, the giving of gifts, the practice of austerities, the offering of sacrifices, the maintenance of personal purity, nor the observance of vows. He is pleased only with pure devotion, all else is but vain show. Therefore, give your devotion, O Dānavas, to Hari, the Supreme Lord, the Soul and Ruler of all hearts, while looking upon all creatures as you would look upon yourselves. There are cases of Daityas, Yakshas and Rākshasas, women, Sūdras, cowherds, birds, beasts and sinful creatures, who have won liberation. This is the supreme gain that a man may achieve in this life, that he gives his entire devotion to Govinda and honours all creatures, seeing Govinda in them' (41-55).

CHAPTER VIII

NARASIMHA SLAYS HIRANYAKASIPU

Nārada said: The children of the Daityas, having heard what he said, accepted that teaching because it was flawless; they would not follow what their teachers taught them. The son of the King's preceptor, seeing how their minds were steadily turned inward, was frightened. He went and told the King in all haste how matters stood. When he heard the unwelcome news of his son's intolerable offence, his body shook with the frenzy of anger, and he made up his mind to slay his son. Assailing with harsh words Prahrada, who did not deserve to be thus treated, and hissing like a serpent that had been trodden under foot, he, who was cruel by nature, looked at him obliquely with wrathful eyes, as he told him, who was self-controlled, and stood before him with bowed head in all humility, 'You stuck-up fool, you vile wretch who would destroy your race, and in your arrogance flout my commands, I shall despatch you this day to Yama's abode. Relying on

what strength do you fearlessly transgress my orders, when all the three worlds and their Guardians quake in terror, seeing me angry ?' (1-7).

Prahrāda replied, 'The strength, not merely of me, O King, but of yourself and of all others, too, who glory in their strength, is He in Whose power are the highest and the lowest, the worlds of the moving and the non-moving, Brahmā and all the rest of them. He is the paramount Lord, functioning as all-powerful time. He manifests himself as vital energy, vigour of mind, courage, strength and the efficiency of all the faculties. He, the All-Highest, the Controller of the three *guṇas*, creates, protects and destroys the universe by His own powers. Discard this *āsuric* disposition, and look upon all with an equal eye. There are, in fact, no enemies except one's own uncontrolled mind, which has fallen away from righteousness. That mental equability is the highest worship that one can offer to the Infinite Lord. There have been those who, not having subdued the six foes that rob one of everything, thought that they had conquered the worlds in all the ten directions. But how could the good man, who has subdued his mind, and has attained wisdom and equability towards all the world, have any enemy, since enemies are only the creatures of one's own ignorance ?' (8-11).

Hiranyakaśipu retorted, 'It is clear that you, who prate thus, are anxious to die ; for men who are eager to die speak incoherently, you fool. Where is this Lord of the universe, if there is one other than me, as you unlucky creature have been saying ? If he is everywhere, why is he not seen in this pillar ? I shall sever your head from the body, you prating fool ; let Hari, your chosen Refuge, save you if he can' (12-14).

The great Asura, thus intimidating the dear devotee of the Lord with foul words in his wrath, sprang up from his throne, snatching his sword. And he of the immense strength hit the pillar with his doubled fist. Instantly there was heard a frightful din, which seemed to split the spheres. Aja and others, who heard that terrific noise in their own abodes, thought that their worlds were crumbling, my dear. He, who had started up with the determination to slay his son, heard

that astounding, unprecedented din, as of thunder from a cloudless sky, but could not discover from where in the assembly hall it came, striking terror into the hearts of the chiefs of the Asura hosts (15-17).

At that moment there emerged from the pillar in the assembly hall the Lord Who had assumed a form that bore no semblance to man or beast, in order to make good His servant's claim and to prove His own presence in all that exists. When the Asura looked all around and saw that mighty form issuing from the pillar, he wondered, 'Ah ! what is this thing that is neither man nor beast, this marvel, a man-lion !' As he was trying to make out what that frightful apparition might be, Hari in the form of Narasimha, stood before him with eyes fierce and fiery like molten gold, and a face that was inexpressibly haughty, with its matted locks and quivering mane, projecting tusks and razor-sharp tongue that flashed like a sword, and an intimidating scowl on it ; with pointed ears that stood erect, a mouth and nostrils wide as mountain-caverns, and a cleft chin that chilled the blood ; with a body reaching up to the skies, covered with hair white as the moonbeam, a short, thick-set neck, broad chest and small belly ; with a multitude of arms reaching out in all directions, with claws for weapons. Gazing upon that awful form, which was unapproachable, and, armed with every weapon, those that were unique to Him, as well as others, had put to flight all Daityas and Dānavas, the Asura said to himself, 'It is hardly to be doubted that it is Hari of the infinite guile that has taken this form for my destruction ; but what can he do, however he mighty try ?' (18-23).

Saying this, the Daitya, armed with the mace, charged Narasimha with a mighty yell like a tusker, only to be engulfed in the splendour of the Lord like the moth in the flame. That should be no matter for surprise, where the Lord, Who is the pure light of *sattva*, is concerned. Had He not, at the beginning of creation, drunk up the darkness that had covered the worlds ? The great Asura rushed forward and wrathfully struck Narasimha with his swift-whirling mace. As he, armed with the mace, attacked Him from different points, the Lord, the Wielder-of-the-mace, seized him as the

son of Tārکشya grabs the great serpent. But he slipped from His loosened grip like the snake from Garuda's, when he plays with it. To allow him to do that was wrong, thought the gods, and the rulers of the spheres, whose places he had usurped, as they lay hid behind the clouds. The great Asura, assuming from the fact that he had been let go, that He feared his strength, tirelessly returned to the attack armed with sword and shield. As he, with the swiftness of a hawk, flew up and down guarding himself from attack by the way he used his shield, Hari let off a peal of titanic laughter which grated harshly on the ear and struck terror into all hearts, and moving with lightning speed, caught him, who had closed his eyes. As he writhed helpless in His grasp, like the rat in the grip of the snake, Hari laid him across His thigh at the entrance (to the assembly hall) and ripped him open as playfully as Garuda does the venomous serpent, though the thunderbolt could not so much as rupture his skin. With eyes dreadful to behold in their blazing wrath, His mane and face red with drops of blood, like those of the lion that has killed an elephant, He, Who wore the entrails like a garland, and was licking the corners of His mouth, threw aside the body of the Asura whose heart-lotus He had plucked out with His pointed claws, and with His multitudinous arms slew in their thousands his armed followers and others who were his partisans, using His claws, weapons and heels. The clouds swept aside by His mane scattered, the planets were dimmed by His blazing eyes, the seas were in a turmoil, buffeted by His breath, the elephants of the quarters trumpeted and wailed, frightened by His thunderous roar. The sky, thick with aerial cars sent flying about by His mane, seemed to rock; the earth was pressed hard by His tread, the mountains were tossed up and down under the force of His onset, and before His splendour the sky and the four quarters lost their lustre (24-33).

As the all-powerful Lord, in Whom was gathered all puissance, Whom none could face in battle, took His seat on the throne in the audience hall, His terrible face intimidating all beholders, nobody dared to go near Him. The celestial nymphs, having seen Hari's slaying

in battle the primordial Daitya, who had been a terrible headache to the three worlds, repeatedly showered Him with flowers, their faces beaming with joy. Then the sky was crowded with row upon row of aerial cars belonging to the gods who were eager to see Him; the celestial kettle-drums boomed, the great Gandharvas sang and their womenfolk danced. Brahmā, Indra, Girīśa and other gods, the sages, the manes, the Siddhas, the Vidyādhara, the great Uragas, the Manus, the Patriarchs, the Gandharvas and Apsarases and the Chāraṇas, Yakshas, Kimpurushas, Vetālas and Siddhas and Kinnaras, and all the attendants of Vishnu headed by Sunanda and Kumuda, assembled there, and standing not far from the seated Purushottama, unapproachable in His splendour, they with folded hands sang His praises, each class separately (34-39).

Brahmā said: 'I abase Myself before the Infinite Lord, Whose powers are endless, Whose exploits are marvellous, Whose deeds sanctify those who hear of them, Who effects the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe through the *guṇas* in a spirit of play, and yet remains His own immutable Self' (40).

Śrī Rudra said: 'The proper time for unleashing Thy wrath is at the end of a thousand *yugas*. Now that this Asura, mere flotsam, has been slain, protect his son, who is Thy devotee and has sought Thy feet, O Lord that lovest Thy devotees' (41).

Indra said: 'Thou, All-Highest, hast in protecting us, recovered for their proper use the sacrificial offerings that are Thy due. The lotus of our heart, Thy home, which had been overshadowed by the Daitya, has begun to bloom again. Of what account is this (sovereignty of the three worlds) to those who serve Thy feet? They do not set much store even by *moksha*, O Lord that art incarnate as part man part lion; how much less shall they value other gains?' (42).

The sages said: 'Thou taughtest us, O Lord, that supreme *tapas* which is contemplation and which is Thine own Glory and by means of which Thou, the First Cause, re-created this universe, which had been absorbed in Thee. That *tapas* had been placed under an interdict by this Asura; and Thou, O Lord That

protectest those who seek refuge in Thee, hast with this body that Thou hast assumed for the protection of the world, sanctioned the practice of that *tapas* again' (43).

The manes said : ' This Asura appropriated to himself by force the offerings made by our descendants with rites for our propitiation. He drank up even the water libations offered with sesamum seeds by men when they bathed in sacred waters. Salutations to Narasimha, the Protector of all Dharmas, Who has recovered them from his belly by tearing out the omentum with His claws' (44).

The Siddhas said : ' We make our prostrations to Thee, O Narasimha, That didst tear with Thy claws the wicked Asura, who, puffed up with pride from various causes, deprived us of our supernatural powers gained by yoga, through the strength of his yoga and austerities' (45).

The Vidyādhara said : ' We offer our salutations eternally to Thee, That hast assumed the form of a man-lion by Thy Māyā and slain in battle as if he were a mere beast, the ignorant fellow who, in the overwhelming pride of his strength and valour, forbade us to use the supernatural powers which we had won by the practice of appropriate methods of *yogic* concentration' (46).

The Nāgas said : ' Salutations to Thee That hast brought joy to our women by cleaving the breast of the wicked creature, who robbed us of the jewels in our crests and our jewel-like women' (47).

The Manus said : ' We Manus, O Lord, who are Thy servants, obeying Thy commandments, have had to put up with the humiliation of seeing the norms of Dharma that we safeguard, flouted by this son of Diti. Now that Thou, O Lord, hast destroyed the black-guard, tell us, Thy servants, what Thou wantest done' (48).

The Patriarchs said : ' We, the Patriarchs, O supreme Lord, who were created by Thee for the purpose, had been unable to propagate progeny, because he had forbidden us to do so. Now he lies dead, his breast split open by Thee. This incarnation of Thine, O Lord That art compact of pure *sattva*, is for the welfare of the worlds' (49).

The Gandharvas said: 'We, O Lord, are Thy players and dancers, and we sing as we play and dance. He who, by the power of his valour and strength, annexed us to his service, has now been laid low by Thee. How can he who has strayed from the right path come to any good?' (50).

The Chāraṇas said: 'We have taken shelter under Thy lotus feet, which bring one freedom from birth and death; for Thou hast despatched this Asura of whom good men went in dread' (51).

The Yakshas said: 'We, whom Thou hast regarded as among Thy principal retainers because of the pleasing services we render, were compelled by this son of Diti to be his palanquin bearers. Thou, knowing the distress he caused to the world, hast slain him, O Narahari That rulest the twenty-four *tattvas*' (52).

The Kimpurushas said: 'We are petty creatures, while Thou art the Mahāpurusha, the Supreme Lord. This worthless creature was destroyed the moment good men uttered maledictions against him' (53).

The Vaitālikas (bards) said: 'We, singing Thy immaculate glories in assemblies and wherever sacrifices were offered, used to receive ample presents. This wicked one, who stopped all that, has been slain by Thee, O Lord; Thou hast rid us, by our great good fortune, of one who afflicted us like a disease' (54).

The Kinnaras said: 'We, O Lord, the bands of Kinnaras, Thy followers, were impressed for unpaid labour by this son of Diti. The sinner has been slain by Thee, O Hari. Be Thou, Lord Narasimha, pleased to ensure our prosperity' (55).

The personal attendants of Viṣṇu said: 'This day we have seen, for the first time, this marvellous form of Thine as a man-lion, which brings all blessings to the worlds, O Lord That art the sanctuary of Thy devotees. He, who was Thy retainer, incurred the curse of the Brahmanas, O Lord. We realize that Thy slaying of him was for his own good' (56).

CHAPTER IX

PRAHLĀDA SINGS THE LORD'S GLORY

Nārada said : Brahmā, Rudra and the other gods, who thus praised the Lord, were unable to go near Him, Who was unapproachable in His wrath. The Goddess Sṛī herself, whom they sent, would not go anywhere near Him, when she saw that extraordinary figure, because having neither seen nor heard of any such thing before, she was afraid. Brahmā sent Prahlāda, who was by his side, telling him, 'Go, my child, to the Lord, Who is incensed against your father, and pacify Him'. Saying 'yes', the child, that supreme devotee of the Lord, approached Him slowly, and with his folded hands raised above his head, he prostrated himself before Him. The Lord, seeing the child who had fallen at His feet, was deluged by loving compassion, and raising him up, He laid on his head that lotus hand which assures the safety of those who are in sore dread of time, the devouring serpent. Freed by the touch of that hand instantly of all impurities, and gaining intuitive knowledge of the Brahma, he was in bliss, as he lodged that lotus foot in his heart, while his whole body thrilled, his heart was drenched with love, and his eyes filled with tears. Serene and single-minded, he extolled Hari, his eyes and his heart fixed upon Him, in words that faltered from love (1-7).

Prahlāda said : 'How can I, belonging to a cruel race, propitiate the Lord Hari, when Brahmā and all the other gods, the contemplatives and the men of enlightenment, whose minds are engaged wholly by what is good, have not been able to do that adequately even with the exhaustless stream of praise they have been lavishing on His glorious qualities? It seems to me that wealth, birth in a good family, beauty, austerities, learning, the possession of mental and bodily vigour, a radiant presence, renown, enterprise, intelligence and the practice of yoga—none of these things suffices for the propitiation of the Supreme Lord; whereas He was pleased with the lord of the elephant herd, because of his devotion. If the Brahmana, who possesses the

twelve qualifications (above mentioned), is averse to the worship of the feet of the Lord of the Lotus Navel, I would regard as his superior the eater of dog's flesh who dedicates to Him all his thoughts, words and deeds, his wealth and his life; for such a man sanctifies the race into which he is born, not he who is swollen with pride. The Lord, Who is perfect in the possession of the Bliss of the Self, does not want honour at the hands of ignorant men for His own sake. It is His compassion that makes Him desire it, since everything that a man offers to the Lord by way of worship comes back to him, as the adornment of the face adds to the attractiveness of its reflection in the mirror. Therefore, unworthy as I am, I shall, setting aside fear, extol, with all the energy and skill at my command, the greatness of the Lord; it is by such praise that the man who is entangled in *samsāra* by his own nescience, is purified (8-12).

'Brahmā and all those others assembled here are afraid of Thee, O Lord That art the embodiment of *sattva*. They are obedient executors of Thy will, unlike us, the Asuras. And the captivating incarnations in which Thou playest Thy various play, are for promoting the welfare of the worlds, their prosperity and happiness. Therefore, restrain Thy anger; the Asura has this day been slain by Thee. Even a good man will be glad to see snakes and scorpions killed. The worlds, freed from anxiety, are eager to see the end of Thy wrath. They shall, in the days to come, think on this form of Thine, O Narasimha, in order to be freed from fear (13-14).

'I, O invincible Lord, am not afraid of this form of Thine, with the frightful mouth and tongue, the eyes blazing like the sun, the eyebrows knit in a frown, and the fierce teeth; garlanded with entrails, the mane besprinkled with blood, the ears high and pointed, the roar as of thunder, that frightens the elephants of the quarters, and the pointed claws that rip open the enemy. But I dread, O Lord That lovest the lowly, the intolerable suffering of one who is caught in the wheel of *samsāra*. Bound to it by my own past *karma*, I find myself in the midst of those who delight in violence and cruelty. When, O Lord That art most comely, shalt

Thou summon me to the sanctuary of Thy feet, which is *moksha*? Since I suffer, in every birth I take, from the fire of grief that burns a man as the result of being deprived of what he loves and joined with what he hates, and every effort made to allay grief itself turns out to be the cause of more grief, and yet I remain lost in the maze, bemused by delusion, loving the body as if it were the Self, teach me, O Lord, how I may be Thy slave. Then I shall, O Narasimha, sing the tale, propagated by Virinchi, of the glorious pastimes that Thou, my Beloved and Well-wisher and Almighty Lord, hast played, and seeking the company of the wise men who lodge in the shadow of Thy feet, shall be freed from the tyranny of likes and dislikes, and emerge unscathed from my travails (15-18).

'Parents afford no protection to their children; neither, O Narasimha, does medicine to the afflicted, nor the ship to those who are drowning at sea. That sure remedy for suffering which all men long for in this world is not within the reach of those whom Thou hast rejected, O Lord; it is at best a palliative that they get. When anyone, high or low, who is dominated by one or other of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, does something which is greatly pleasing to anybody—be it something new or a modification of what exists—anywhere, for any reason, at any time, through anybody's prompting, employing any instrument, taking from anybody, or acting upon anybody, and doing it in any form or manner whatsoever—he, and what he does and all that is involved in it, are in essence only Thee (19-20).

'Māyā, when the equilibrium of the *guṇas* in her is disturbed by time, creates, prompted by the Puruṣa, (Thy fraction), (the subtle body which has for its principal constituent) the mind. That mind, whose nature is activity, being full of the residual impressions of *kārma*, is not easily subdued. It is mainly preoccupied with the *karmas*, sacred and secular, enjoined by the Veda. And it constitutes, with the sixteen modifications of Prakṛti, (which are its spokes, as it were), provided by the *jīva*'s nescience, the wheel of *samsāra*. How can anybody who has cut himself off from Thee, O Lord That knowest no birth, hope to escape it? Thy plenary

Consciousness gives Thee eternal mastery over the properties of the intellect. And Thou art Time, the controller of the powers of cause and effect alike. Entangled by Māyā in the wheel of sixteen spokes that is *samsāra*, I am being crushed. Take me to Thyself, all-powerful Lord, I throw myself on Thy mercy. I know those blessings enjoyed by the Guardians of the worlds in heaven, for which mortals long with all their hearts, their extraordinary length of life, opulence and powers. The mere frown of my father, when he laughed his angry laugh, could destroy those things; and he was destroyed by Thee. Therefore, knowing as I do those blessings, long life, prosperity and greatness, which mortals crave, and all those enjoyments, including Brahmā's, that are open to the senses, I do not want them. Neither do I want those supernatural powers which are easily destroyed by Thee functioning as all-powerful time. Only lead me to the side of Thy true servants. How petty are those pleasures, which are mirage-like in their nature and merely titillate the ear, and what a poor thing is this body, the breeding ground of all diseases! And yet even men who realize this, do not get disgusted with life, being busy seeking to allay the raging fire of desire with those honey-drops of pleasure which it is so difficult to procure (20-25).

'Ah! how unworthy, I, born of *rajas*, and in the Asura race, which is dominated by *tamas*, and how wonderful Thy compassion in bestowing Thy grace, O Lord, on me, laying on my head Thy lotus hand; that grace which neither Brahmā, nor Bhava, nor Ramā has known! The sense of distinction in terms of "high" and "low", which characterizes the common run of creatures, is not in Thee That art the Soul of the universe and its true friend. Still, Thy grace is won by devoted service. Thou grantest just those favours that are sought of Thee, as the wishing tree does to those who resort to it, and according to their service; they are not dispensed on considerations of superiority or inferiority. When I was about to follow in the footsteps of men who had fallen into the well infested by snakes, which is the worldly life, as the result of looking with yearning for pleasure everywhere, the celestial

sage adopted me for his own and bestowed his blessing on me. How then can I abjure the service of Thy devotees? The saving of my life, and the slaying of my father, when he, intent on doing what was wrong, snatched his sword saying, "If there is a God other than me, let him save you now; I am going to cut off your head,"—were, to my mind, prompted by Thy desire to make good the claim of the sages, Thy devotees (26-29).

'This world is nothing but Thee and Thee alone, since Thou alone existest before it comes into being and Thou alone remainest after it is destroyed; and therefore Thou alone art even in the interim. Having created by Thine own Māyā this universe, which is the product of the modifications of the *guṇas*, Thou seemest to enter it, and by association with the *guṇas*, appearest as many. This world of cause and effect is but Thee, O Lord, but Thou art different from it. And so the notions of "own" and "alien" are meaningless self-delusion. That into which something is born, and in which it lives and dies, and by which it is manifested, cannot be different from it; just as the tree and the seed are essentially the same as the earth and its subtle element (odour) (30-31).

'Withdrawing the universe into Thyself of Thine own free will, Thou liest down on the waters at the time of the world's dissolution in the enjoyment of the bliss of the Self and wholly free from activity. Thine eyes are closed in yoga, not in slumber, which is dispelled by the light of Thy essential Self. For, in that state which transcends the three states (of waking, dream and sleep), Thou experiencest neither the oblivion of sleep nor the objects of the senses. And Thou, the self-same Lord, dost assume the form of this universe when, ceasing from *samādhi*, Thou activatest, by time, Thy power, as Thou liest on the waters on Ananta, Thy couch, the *guṇas* of Prakṛti; whereupon there emerges from Thy navel, like the banyan tree from a tiny seed, the great lotus that has lain hidden in Thee. Brahmā, who appeared in it, saw nothing else but that lotus. Nor did he know that Thou didst pervade him as the material cause of his being; for, thinking that it was outside him, he looked for it in the waters, remaining

plunged in them for a hundred years. But how can one see the seed when the sprout has come out? Astonished by this, the Self-born returned to the lotus and remained in it engaged in intense contemplation, and with his mind thus cleansed, perceived Thee as pervading his own body composed of the elements, the organs and the mind, in an exceedingly subtle state, like smell diffused in the earth. Likewise, Virinchi saw the Mahāpurusha, Whose substance was predominantly constituted of Māyā, and Whose body with its innumerable faces, feet, heads, arms, thighs, noses, mouths, ears, and eyes, was symbolized by the universe in the disposition of its limbs. He was adorned with a profusion of ornaments and armed with many weapons. Seeing Him thus, Brahmā was transported with joy. Taking the form of Hayagrīva, Thou slewest Madhu and Kaitabha, who were the embodiments of *rajas* and *tamas* and the enemies of the Veda, and retrieved the entire body of Vedas from them and gavest it to him (Brahmā). They say that it is Thy *sāttvic* form that is most dear to Thee. Thus Thou protectest the worlds, O Lord That art supremely great, slayest its enemies, incarnating Thyself for the purpose as a man or a beast, as a sage, as a god or as a fish, and safeguardest the Dharma germane to each *yuga*. Because in the Kali-yuga Thou art unmanifest, Thou art called Triyuga (32-38).

‘This mind, O Lord of Vaikuntha, does not delight in the tales of Thy Glory, being vitiated by sin, wayward, intractable, plagued by lust, distracted by joy and grief, by fear and the three deep yearnings. With a mind in that state, how can I, so hopelessly dependent on it, seek to comprehend Thy essential Self? The insatiate tongue pulls me in one direction, O Achyuta, the appetite for sex in another; the tactile sense, the stomach, the ear, the sense of smell and the restless eye and all the organs of action—each pulls a different way. They drag me hither and thither as his many wives do the master of the household. Seeing the world of men fallen by their own *karma* into the Vaitaraṇī of *samsāra*, and confounded by the terror of birth, death and privation, of which others might be the cause, and cherishing

animosity or friendship as the case may be for the bodies of others, Thou shouldst take pity on them, O Lord That art on the farther shore, and save them by ferrying them across. How little is the effort called for on Thy part to do this, O Teacher of the worlds and Author of the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds ! The great should shed their grace on the ignorant, O Friend of the afflicted. We, who devote ourselves to the service of Thy loved devotees, do not need to be uplifted thus. I for one, O Supreme Lord, am not afraid of that Vaitaraṇī which so formidably bars the way, my heart being plunged in the nectar-bliss of singing Thy exploits. But I grieve for the foolish folk who have turned their faces away from that bliss, and bear the burden of the family life for the phantom delights of the senses. Most sages, O Lord, desiring their own salvation, lead silent, solitary lives ; they do not devote themselves to the uplifting of others. But I do not want *moksha* for myself, deserting these unfortunates ; and I see no other refuge but Thee for those who wander in the maze (39-44).

‘The pleasures of sex and those others that are to be had in the domestic life are trivial ; and like attempts to stop the itching of the hands by scratching, the more they are indulged the more is the resultant misery. But even though they reap nothing but unhappiness, these poor creatures cannot have enough of such indulgence. It is only the man of heroic temper who can withstand the imperious urge of lust, even as some few resist the longing to scratch themselves. The observance of silence, the practice of vows and susterities, the acquisition of knowledge, the study of the Vedas, fidelity to one's own Dharma, the teaching of Sāstras to others, the preference for the solitary life, the practice of *japa* and of meditation—all these means to liberation become, in the case of those who have not subdued the senses, practically means of livelihood, O Lord That rulest our hearts ; while in the case of hypocrites it is doubtful whether they can be useful to them even in that way (45-46).

‘The worlds of cause and effect, which represent the eternal flux, like seed and sprout, are Thy two forms,

which the Veda declares ; being formless, Thou hast none other. Those that have controlled their minds see Thee in both of them by the practice of devotion, as fire is found in the log of wood by churning. They can know Thee in no other way. Thou art fire, earth, *ākāśa* (space), water, the subtle elements, the vital airs, the organs, the mind, the *chitta* and the ego. Thou alone art the world of gross and subtle things, O Lord That art supremely great. There is nothing comprehended by mind or speech that is not Thee. Neither the *guṇas*, nor those (gods etc.) who identify themselves with them, nor *Mahat*, the ego and so on, the mind, the *chitta* and the rest, in fact no creature, neither god nor man, can know Thee, O Lord That are much sung, because they have all a beginning and an end. Men who have achieved wisdom, having come to this conclusion, cease from study and other such activities. How can men gain devotion to Thee, O Lord That art supremely worthy of reverence, and art the goal of the Paramahamsas, unless they offer Thee devout worship with its six features, prostrations to Thee, hymning Thy praises, dedication of all work to Thee, engaging in Thy service, meditation on Thy feet, and listening to Thy glories ?' (47-50).

Nārada said : The Lord, Who is unconditioned by attributes, listening to the praise of His glorious virtues, which His devotee uttered out of his abounding love, was pleased; and He spoke to Prahlaḍa, who stood before Him bowed in reverence. The Lord said : ' Prahlaḍa, dear child, may all that is auspicious be yours. I am pleased with you, O best of Asuras. Ask any boon you wish. I am the fulfiller of men's wishes. He who has not propitiated Me cannot hope to see Me ; but the man who has seen Me shall no longer bewail his lack. So the saints, who have achieved Self-control and are supremely blest, desiring beatitude, set themselves with all their hearts to propitiate Me, the Dispenser of all blessings ' (51-54).

Though thus tempted by the promise of boons, to which all the world would have succumbed, the great Asura would have none of them, because of his disinterested devotion to the Lord (55).

CHAPTER X

THE LORD ON PRAHLĀDA'S GREATNESS

Nārada said: The child, holding that all boons would be an obstacle to the pursuit of devotion, answered Hṛṣhikeśa with a smile. Prahlāda said, 'Please, please, do not tempt me, who am by nature attracted by pleasures, with the offer of such boons. Afraid of that attachment, disgusted with pleasures, and desiring liberation, I have sought Thy protection. It was evidently from the desire to draw me out on the topic of the characteristics of the true devotee that Thou, O Lord, didst try to interest me in pleasures which contain the seeds of *samsāra* and are the true knots of the heart. Thou, O Lord That art the Mentor of all that lives and the very soul of kindness, wouldst hardly do it for any other reason. He who seeks of Thee the fulfilment of his wishes is not Thy servant but a trader. The man who seeks anything for himself of his master is no true servant; nor is he a master who grants a man's wish in order to assert his dominion over him. I am Thy disinterested devotee, and Thou art my Lord wanting nothing of me. Neither of us has any use for the kind of relationship that subsists between a king and his retainer (1-6).

'But if Thou wouldst still grant me boons, O Lord of boons, let Thy boon to me be that no desires shall spring up in my heart. The birth of desires sees the destruction of the senses, the mind, the life-breath, the body, Dharma, fortitude, intelligence, modesty, opulence, power, recollection and truth. Only when a man abjures the desires that have found lodgement in the mind does he become elevated to that status which partakes of Thy magnificence. Salutations to Thee, Hari, the Marvellous Lion, the Brahma and Paramātman' (7-10).

The Lord Nṛsimha told him, 'Those who like you are wholeheartedly devoted to Me never seek any blessing of Me, to be enjoyed here or hereafter. Still you shall enjoy the pleasures that are open to the Lords of the Daityas for the whole of this Manvantara. Hearing

the tales of My glory, in which you delight, and enshrining in your heart Me, the Lord of the sacrifice, the One Supreme Lord present in all creatures, worship Me, dedicating the fruits to Me and thus freeing yourself from the bondage of *karma*. Having exhausted your accumulated store of merit by enjoyment of the fruits, and your sins by doing what is meritorious, and having discarded the body when the years have quickly passed, and spread your spotless fame, which shall be sung in the world of the gods, you shall be freed from bondage and reach Me. He who, remembering you and Me and this exploit of Mine, recites this hymn of yours, shall be freed from the bondage of *karma* (11-14).

Prahlaḍa prayed, 'I pray for this boon also from Thee, O Lord of boons, supreme over all powers. My father, not knowing the power of the Lord Who rules over all, blamed Thee, Mentor and Father of the worlds, for the death of his brother, unbalanced by anger as he was and unable to see the truth; and he also wronged me, Thy devotee. Grant, O Lord, that he may be freed from the endless, formidable sin he thus incurred. He was purified without a doubt the moment Thy side-long glance rested on him. But (I am moved to make this appeal because) Thou lovest the lowly' (15-17).

The Lord assured him, 'Your father, along with your ancestors as far back as the twenty-first generation, has been purified, O flawless one, since you, a saint, were born in his family to sanctify his race. Wherever are to be found My devotees, who have won tranquillity and look upon all with an equal eye, who are goodness itself and follow the highest standards of conduct, those places, even if they are as impure as the countries known as the *Kikatas*, (as well as their inhabitants), are absolved of all sin. Freed from all desire by devotion to Me, they injure in no way whatever any creature, high or low, O Chief of the Daityas. And those who follow in your footsteps shall develop the same devotion to Me. You shall be an exemplar and model for all My devotees. Your father, having felt the contact of My body, has been wholly purified, My dear. Still, do the last rites for him that are enjoined on you. And he, the father of a good son, shall go to the worlds of bliss. Take

your father's place, with your mind anchored in Me. Putting your trust in Me, do *karmas* under the directions of those who know the Veda' (18-23).

Nārada said : And Prahlāda performed the obsequial rites for his father, as advised by the Lord, O King, and he was consecrated by the best of Brahmanas. Brahmā, seeing Hari, the Man-lion, with a gracious look on His face, extolled Him in the words of sacred hymns, and then spoke to Him thus in the presence of the gods and others. Brahmā said : ' Fortunately, O God of gods, Ruler and Controller of all, That wert before aught else, this wicked Asura, who harried all the worlds, has been slain by Thee. Having won boons from me, he could not be slain by anyone created by me. Puffed up with the pride of strength won by austerities and yoga, he violated all Dharmas enjoined by the Vedas. It is a matter for thankfulness that his son, this saintly child and great devotee, was saved by Thee from death and has now reached Thy presence. This form of Thine, O Lord, shall save him who contemplates it with his mind under control, from perils wherever they might come from, even from imminent death ' (26-29).

Nṛsimha said : ' You should not grant boons in this manner to Asuras, O Lotus-born ; a boon to those who are cruel by nature is like milk fed to vipers ' (30).

Nārada said : Having said this, O King, and received the worship of the Chief of the Creators, the Lord Hari instantly vanished from view, disappearing at the very spot. Prahlāda then offered worship and bowed his head to the great Creator, to Bhava, and to the Patriarchs and the gods, the fractions of the Lord. Brahmā, along with the sages, Sukra and the rest, crowned Prahlāda ruler of the Daityas and the Dānavas. Duly honoured by him, Brahmā and the other gods congratulated and blessed him, and returned to their own abodes (31-34).

Those two personal attendants of Vishnu, who were born as the sons of Diti and were slain by Hari, Who dwells in the heart, because of the enmity they entertained against Him, were again reborn as the result of the Brahmanas' curse, as the Rākshasas Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarna, and these were slain by the valiant

Rama. Lying on the battle-field, their hearts split by Rama's arrows, they discarded the body, thinking of Him, as they had done in their previous birth. The same two were reborn here as Sisupāla and the son of the King of Karūsha, and by their inveterate hostility to Hari were merged in Him before your eyes. The kings, who, in their enmity to Krishna, incurred sin, shed it in the end by becoming assimilated to His essence, as the worm becomes assimilated to the wasp. Those kings, the Ruler of Chedi and others, obtained by constantly dwelling upon Him in their thoughts, that identity with the Lord which the devotees achieve by devotion untainted by the sense of difference (35-40).

I have now told you all that you wanted to know regarding the merging of the son of Damaghosha and others in Hari, in spite of their enmity to Him. I have recounted the story of this incarnation of the great-souled Krishna, the God Who loves the Brahmana, including in it an account of the slaying of the first Daityas. The story of Prahlāda, the great devotee; the way he practised devotion and acquired knowledge and dispassion; the essential truth about Hari Who controls the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe; His glorious qualities and exploits; the wholesale subversion of the positions of high and low alike by the passage of time; the Dharmas practised by devotees of the Lord, by means of which they win Him; the way of discrimination between the Self and the not-Self and all other matters connected with the Ātman—all this has been dealt with in the course of this narration. He who, having attentively listened to this holy story, whose virtue is enhanced by the exploits of Vishnu, which it records, relates it to others, will be freed from the bondage of *karma*. He who reads with a collected mind this account of the Primordial Lord's playful role as a lion, and the slaying of the great Chief of the Daityas and the commanders of his army, and the heroism, to hear of which is to be purified, of his son, foremost among the saintly, will attain the world where fear is not. You are among the most blessed of mortals, since the sages, who purify the world, come to your house from everywhere, because there lives among you one who is

the Parabrahma in human guise. This uncle's son of yours, your beloved friend and well-wisher, your very self, and worthy of all honour at your hands, who does your will, and is your mentor, is none other than the Brahma, the Intuition of unconditioned bliss, Which is the goal of the great. May He, the Lord of the devotees, the essential truth of Whom has not been discerned and described even by Bhava, Brahmā and others, be gracious to us, propitiated by our silent meditation, worship and self-control. He, the exalted Lord, O King, once undid the mischief done by Maya, the wizard, the master of a million tricks, to damage the God Rudra's reputation, and actually enhanced it (41-51).

The King asked, 'In what act did Maya damage the fame of the God Who rules the world, and how did our Krishna repair it? Tell me, please' (52).

Nārada said : The Asuras, vanquished by the gods, who were sustained by the Lord, sought the help of Maya, the supreme preceptor of all wizards. That capable Asura made three flying fortresses of gold, silver and iron respectively, which could come and go unseen, and were provided with weapons and instruments which outsiders could not know. And he gave them to the Asuras. With these fortresses at their disposal, the commanders of the Asura forces, remembering their old enmity, played havoc with the three worlds and their rulers, themselves hidden from view. Thereupon the three worlds with their rulers threw themselves on the mercy of the Supreme Lord (Siva), and prayed, O all-powerful one, 'Save us, Thy own folk, O Lord, we are being slaughtered by the inhabitants of the Three-fortresses.' Thereupon the exalted Lord reassured them, saying, 'Don't you fear,' and fitted an arrow powered with spells to His bow and assailed the fortresses. From that arrow issued, like massed rays from the orb of the sun, arrows of a fiery red; and the fortresses could not be seen. Touched by those arrows, the dwellers therein fell down dead. But Maya, the great adept in yoga, took them and plunged them in the well of nectar-like fluid (which he had created). At the touch of the nectar prepared by Maya, the Asuras sprang into life, with bodies of an adamant hardness and

immense strength, like the fire of lightning by which clouds are riven (53-60).

Seeing the Lord of the bull flag frustrated thus and unhappy, the Lord Vishnu devised an expedient. Brahmā took the form of a calf. And Vishnu (Who is Krishna now) appeared as a cow. Entering the fortresses at midday, he drank up the nectar in the well of nectar. The Asuras, though they saw what was happening, did not stop it, their minds being confounded. When he came to know of this, the great yogi (Maya) told the guards placed at the well of nectar, who were greatly distressed, while he himself was untroubled by grief because he realized how inscrutable destiny is, 'There is no one, be he god, Asura, man or other creature, who can annul what fate has decreed for himself, for another or for both' (61-65).

Then the Lord (Krishna) provided Sambhu with the implements of war—chariot, driver, flag, horses, bow and arrow, armour, and so on—by means of His own powers of Dharma, Jñāna, dispassion, plenitude, austerities, knowledge and activity. Donning coat of mail, the all-powerful Hara got into the chariot, when the sun was at the meridian. And fitting an arrow to the bow, He burnt with it the impregnable fortresses, O King. Kettle-drums sounded in the sky. The chief gods, sages, manes and Siddhas showered flowers from their tumultuous crowd of aerial cars, with the cries of 'Victory to Thee!' And the delighted bands of Apsarases danced and sang. Thus the 'Three-fortresses' were burnt, O King, and the exalted Lord, their Destroyer, entered His own home, extolled by Brahmā and others. Many such are the exploits which purify the worlds, performed by Hari, the Master of the worlds, Who masqueraded as man, employing His power of Māyā—exploits which the sages have sung. What else shall I tell you about? (66-71).

CHAPTER XI

NĀRADA DISCOURSES ON DHARMA

Sri Suka said : Having heard the story, acclaimed wherever good men forgather, of the chief of the Dait-yas, who was in the van of the supremely great, because his mind was anchored in the mighty Lord, Yudhishtira was filled with joy. And he again questioned the son of the Self-existent. Yudhishtira said, ' I wish to hear, O blessed sage, of the eternal Dharma and the duties prescribed for the different *varṇas* and *āśramas* by the practice of which men attain enlightenment and devotion. You are the son of the Chief of the Creators, no less, and by virtue of your austerities, *yogic* powers and practice of *samādhi*, esteemed by him most among all his sons. Brahmanas like you, who are devoted to Nārāyaṇa and are full of compassion, who love to do good and are at peace with themselves, know the highest and most secret Dharma; not others' (1-4).

Thereupon Nārada began his discourse : Making my prostrations to the exalted Lord Nārāyaṇa, Who is the cause of all the worlds' following Dharma, I shall speak of the primordial Dharma as I heard it expounded by Nārāyaṇa Himself, Who, born along with Nara, a fraction of Himself, as the sons of Dharma and a daughter of Dakṣa, is to this day established in the practice of *tapas* at the Badarikāśrama for the welfare of the worlds. The exalted Lord Hari, Who is all the Vedas, is the source and authority for Dharma; and after Him, the Smṛtis, which are the work of men who know the Vedas. Those Dharmas which are based on the practice of men of unblemished lives, and which result in mental peace and satisfaction, are also to be regarded as authoritative. Truthfulness, compassion, austerity, purity, endurance, discrimination, control of the mind and the senses, non-violence, continence, and liberality; the performance of such *mantra-japa* as one has competence for; straightforwardness; contentment; service to those who are impartial towards all the world; gradual withdrawal from the active life; pondering over the futility of much striving; sparing speech;

inquiry into the Self (as different from the non-Self); distributing food and other such requirements equitably among all creatures; the habit of looking upon all of them, and men in particular, as none other than one's own Self or one's God, O son of Pāṇdu; and hearing about the glories of the Lord, the Goal of the great, extolling His virtues, thinking constantly on Him, service to Him, the offering of worship, prostrating oneself before Him, dedicating the fruits of one's actions to Him, as a servant would, having the trusting faith of a friend in Him, and surrendering oneself into His hands—it is the Dharma characterised by these thirty qualities that is the highest of all Dharmas, and incumbent on all men; and by the practice of this Dharma, the Lord, Who is the All-Soul, is pleased (5-12).

He is a member of the twice-born classes for whom *samskāras* have been performed in all completeness, and who has been designated as such by Āja. The offering of sacrifices, the study of the Vedas and the making of gifts are obligatory for the twice-born who are pure by birth and by their conduct. They should also discharge the duties prescribed for different *āśramas*. These are, for the Brahmana, the six *karmas* beginning with the study of the Veda, and for the Kshatriya, all of them except the receiving of gifts. The king, who protects his subjects, can collect taxes, and so on, from all except Brahmanas. The Vaiśya must live by trade and husbandry, and he should be ever submissive to the Brahmana. The Sūdra must serve the Brahmana; the service of his master will also be the means of his livelihood (13-15).

For the Brahmana, four other means of livelihood are also permitted (in emergencies). These are different kinds of husbandry and trade; living on chance gains obtained without importuning others; seeking alms of grain every day; picking up stray ears of corn from fields, left ungarnered by the owner, and trifles dropped near the shops. Of these each succeeding one is to be preferred to that which precedes it. No one belonging to an inferior class should take to a superior vocation except in distress; when everyone, except the Kshatriya, may live by any means that offers. It is said that 'one

may live by *Rta* or *Amṛta*, by *Mṛta* or *Pramṛta*, by *Satyānṛta*, but never by the dog's mode of subsistence.' Here, *Rta* means living by picking up what has been abandoned in fields and bazaars; *Amṛta*, what is got without begging; *Mṛta*, what is obtained as alms; *Pramṛta*, the tilling of land and the like. *Satyānṛta* is trade; while 'the dog's mode of subsistence' is service under an inferior. The Brahmana and the Kshattriya should scrupulously avoid such a shameful way of making one's living. For the Brāhmana is all-the-Vedas, and the King all-the-gods (16-20).

The control of the mind and the senses, the practice of austerities, the maintenance of purity, contentment, forbearance, straightforwardness, *jnāna*, compassion, devotion to Vishnu and truthfulness, are the marks of the Brahmana. Warlike spirit, valour, fortitude, daring, liberality, control of the mind, forgiveness, devotion to the Brahmana, benevolence and the protection of those who seek it—these are the marks of the Kshattriya. Devotion to the god of his choice and to his Guru as well as to Achyuta, the finding all satisfaction in devotion to the three ends of life, faith in the scriptures, untiring enterprise and skill in bringing it to fruition—these are the marks of the Vaiśya. Submissiveness, purity, sincere service to his master, the offering of sacrifices without the reciting of *mantras*, forbearance from what does not belong to him, truth-speaking, and the care of Brahmanas and the cow, are the marks of the Sūdra. Women, who look upon their husbands as their God, are known by the faithfulness with which they do their duty of serving them, acting conformably to their wishes, behaving with friendliness towards their relations, and keeping the same vows as their husbands. The good woman should adorn her own person and keep her household utensils and furniture in spick and span condition. She should keep the house well swept and garnished, plastered with cow-dung and decorated with auspicious patterns. She should assiduously strive to please her husband by getting him whatever he wants, big or small, conducting herself towards him with humility and self-restraint, speaking what is true and pleasant, and giving him love as occasion serves. Con-

tent with what she gets, ungreedy, capable, well-conversant with Dharma, truthful and sweet-spoken, she should ever wait upon her husband, if he has not fallen into grievous sin, with all alertness, keeping herself pure, and lavishing her affection upon him. The woman who serves her husband with whole-hearted devotion, looking upon him as Hari, even as the Goddess Śrī waits upon Hari, will rejoice in the world of Hari in the company of her husband, who will bear the semblance of Hari (21-29).

The means of livelihood adopted by the mixed castes, who do not steal or do sinful acts, and who are comprehended under the terms 'Antyaja' and 'Antevasāyin', should be what they have traditionally adopted. Those who are enlightened by the Veda consider that the Dharmas prescribed for men in every *yuga* are those that are mostly determined by their own disposition. These, if followed faithfully, will bring them nothing but good here and hereafter. The man who, discharging the duties incumbent on him, adopts the means of livelihood that has been prescribed as most in accord with his natural disposition, comes gradually to be freed from bondage to the *karmas* determined by his nature, and thus, from the sway of the *guṇas*. The field that is sown again and again becomes barren; it loses its capacity to produce, and the seed sown in it perishes. Likewise, the mind, which is the store-house of latent desires, develops a distaste for pleasures from excessive addiction, O King, not from small indulgences; even as fire is not put out by drops of ghee (while a copious draught would put it out). If any of the indicia of a particular *varṇa* (as stated here) is found in any man who belongs to a different *varṇa*, he should be regarded as properly belonging to that *varṇa* (30-35).

CHAPTER XII

THE STUDENT AND THE HERMIT

Nārada said: The student, living in his preceptor's household, should lead a disciplined life, loving his teacher, doing what is good for him, and conducting

himself with the humility of a servant. Both morning and evening he should worship his Guru, the sun, the fire and the great gods. With a collected mind he should recite the Gāyatri (thrice a day) during his *sandhyā* worship, observing silence at the morning and evening worship. He should, at the summons of his Guru, learn from him the recitation of the Veda in the correct mode, observing the strictest discipline. When beginning and ending the recitation, he should prostrate himself at the feet of the Guru. He should wear the grass girdle and the garment of deer-skin and allow his hair to grow matted. He should wear the sacred thread and carry the prescribed staff and water-pot, as well as *darbha* grass. He should beg alms morning and evening, and place what he gets before his Guru. He may eat with his permission; if sometimes that is not forthcoming, he should go without food. He should be pure in his conduct and eat but sparsely; he should not give way to sloth. He should have faith, and perfect control over his senses. He should deal with women, and those who are addicted to their company, only to the extent necessary. Every man, who is not a householder, and who is vowed to celibacy, should avoid even talk about women; the turbulent senses overpower even the mind of the ascetic. A young man should not allow the women of his Guru's household or other young women to do for him such services as combing the hair, massaging the body, rubbing it with oil, bathing it or applying collyrium to the eyes. There is no greater fire than woman. And man is like the pot of ghee. One should avoid meeting even one's daughter in private; and even in public he may meet her only when and for so long as is necessary. So long as the *jīva* does not really become free, having realized the self and seen for himself that all this (the body, the senses, and so on) is illusory, so long will the notion of duality (the distinction of man and woman) persist for him, and keep him in a condition subversive of his true status (I-10).

All that has been said so far applies even to the householder and to the ascetic; except only that waiting upon his Guru is optional for the householder, who will have

relations with his wife in the proper season, and wait upon his Guru only sometimes. Those who are vowed to celibacy (including those who are householders), should give up rubbing the body with oil, applying oil to the head, massaging the body, conversing with women or looking at drawings of them, eating flesh, drinking spirituous liquor and adorning themselves with garlands, perfumes, unguents and ornaments. The man belonging to the twice-born classes, having thus lived in the Guru's household, learnt the Vedas by rote along with the ancillary sciences and the Upanishads to the limit of his competence and capacity, investigated and understood their purport, and given the teacher whatever he desires, if he is able to do it, may with his permission, become a householder, or a hermit in the forest, or an ascetic; or he may stay on with the Guru (as a life-long celibate). He should meditate upon Adhokshaja as being present in the fire, in the Guru, in his own self and in all creatures, along with the *jīvas* dependent upon Him, as though He had entered them, though in fact He does not. The celibate student, hermit, ascetic or householder who lives thus, and obtains knowledge of that which should be known, attains the Para Brahma (II-16).

And now I shall speak of the discipline to be observed by the hermit, which has the sanction of the sages; by observing that discipline here the hermit easily attains the world of the sages (Maharloka). He shall not eat the produce of tillage, nor what is found in the natural state, if it has been gathered in an unripe condition. He may not eat what is cooked over a fire or what is uncooked, but only what has ripened in the sun. He should make the daily obligatory offerings of *charu* and *purōdāśa* with forest produce. Whenever fresh food is available, he should throw away what was gathered earlier. He should shelter, only for keeping the sacred fire burning, in a hut of leaves or in a mountain cavern, putting up for his own part with cold and winds, heat, rain and sun. Without shaving off the hair on the head, the body and the beard, or paring his nails, or too finically cleaning himself, the hermit with matted hair, carrying a water pot, a couple of deer skins, a staff,

tree bark and materials needed for the fire-rite, should live in the forest for twelve, eight, four or two years, or for only one, taking care that his mind does not get unsettled by the exceptional hardships of that life (17-22).

When he becomes unable to discharge his duties on account of illness or age, and is incapable of applying himself to the pursuit of the knowledge of the Self, he should enter on a fast. He should withdraw the sacred fires into himself, abjure the notions of 'me' and 'mine', and mentally merge the elements of the body complex in their respective causes. The intelligent man should (mentally) merge the spaces within the body in outer space, the five vital airs in air, the heat of the body in fire, his blood, chyle and excretions in water, and the rest in earth, thus restoring everything to its origin. Similarly he should unite the world of speech and the vocal faculty with the god of fire, the manual faculty and its uses with Indra, the power of locomotion and all movements with Vishṇu, the power of generation and the pleasures of sex with the Progenitor (Brahmā), the power of evacuation and the result thereof with death. He should unite hearing and the world of sounds with the gods presiding over the cardinals, the tactile sense and the world of touch with the god who presides over air, and sight and the world of colours with the sun-god, O King. He should unite the faculty of taste and the world of flavours with Prachetas (Varuṇa), and smell and the world of odours with the goddess of earth. He should unite the mind and its operations with the moon; the intellect and its concerns with the Para Brahma; all actions and the ego with Rudra, who inspires action prompted by possessiveness; the *chitta*, along with the *guṇas*, *sattva* and the rest, with the *jīva*; and the *jīva*, which is subject to the vicissitudes wrought by the *guṇas*, with the Para Brahma. He should merge the earth in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in space, space in the ego, the ego in the Mahat, the Mahat in the Pradhāna and the Pradhāna in the Paramātman. Realizing that what is left is the *jīva*, who is pure consciousness, and is none other than the Paramātman, he should rest in

his pristime non-duality, like fire that has consumed its fuel (23-31).

CHAPTER XIII

THE DUTIES OF THE ASCETIC RENOUNCER

Nārada said : He, however, who can shoulder the responsibilities of the renouncer, should discard everything except the body and wander over the earth, harbouring no desires, and observing the rule of spending no more than one night at any village. If he should wear any cloth, it should not be more than what would serve to screen the private parts. Except in distress, he should not revert to the use of anything he had discarded before renouncing ; retaining only the staff and such other things as are indicative of his *āśrama*. He should lead the life of a homeless, lone wanderer, begging his food and finding all delight in the Self. He should be friendly towards all that lives, tranquil at heart and devoted to Nārāyaṇa. He should see the phenomenal universe as projected on his own soul, which is distinct from the world of cause and effect, and immutable ; and he should see, too, his soul as the transcendent Brahma pervading cause and effect alike. By focussing his attention on his own soul at the point where the states of waking and of sleep meet, he will learn the truth about the soul and realize that bondage and release are both the products of illusion. Let him neither welcome death, which will come any way, nor rejoice in life, which may end any moment. He will passively wait upon time, which brings both life and death (1-6).

He should not succumb to the charms of profane literature, nor make knowledge a means of livelihood. He should refrain from barren dialectics and logic-chopping, and avoid taking sides in any quarrel. He should not try to attract disciples ; nor should he apply himself to the study of many books. He should not lecture for a living, nor engage in any enterprise. Where the high-souled ascetic, who has won tranquillity, and equability, is concerned, his *āśrama* is no longer a means

to the gaining of Dharma. He may discard or keep at his choice its external signs and disciplines. With no external signs to distinguish him, the enlightened man, ever engaged in the investigation of the Self, behaves before men like a madman or a child, or like a dumb man, however wise and eloquent he may be (7-10).

In this connection there is an old tale told of a conversation between Prahlāda and a sage who practised the mode of life of a python. Prahlāda, the beloved of the Lord, as he was touring the worlds accompanied by some of his ministers, to ascertain the condition of the people, came upon him, who lay on the bare ground on the flank of the Sahya mountain adjoining the Kaveri, his spotless glory hidden by the dust that covered his body. The Āsura, the great devotee of the Lord, wishing to know more about him, made his prostrations to him, of whom people could make out nothing, whether from his actions, appearance or words, and who bore no marks indicative of *varṇa* and *āśrāma*. Bowing at his feet and worshipping him as ordained, he questioned him. 'You have a robust, well-nourished body such as those who are active and who enjoy all comforts have. Only men of enterprise command wealth, and wealth alone procures enjoyments. And only those who command all comforts have hefty, well-nourished bodies, not others. The wealth which brings enjoyments could hardly be yours, O Brahman, who lie down in one place and are inactive. How is it that you, who have no enjoyments, have a stout body? Be pleased to tell us, if it is proper for us to hear. You are learned, capable and accomplished. You can talk entertainingly of many matters. You look on all the world with an equal eye. But, while the world works and you see it working, you just lie down (doing nothing)' (11-18).

Nārada said: Thus respectfully questioned by the Lord of the Daityas, the great sage smiled and answered him, his heart won by the nectar-like sweetness of his words. The Brahmana said: 'You, O best of Āsuras, who have the approbation of men of wisdom, do assuredly know, by your insight, the fruits of worldly activity and of withdrawal from the world; for the exalted

Lord Narayana abides in your heart by reason of your pure devotion, and destroys ignorance as the sun dispels darkness. Still we shall answer your questions, in the light of what we have learnt from others, for you are worthy of honour at the hands of those who would cleanse their souls of impurities (19-22).

‘Impelled to do work by desire, which is never sated however much one may indulge all legitimate pleasures, and which is the cause of the eternal flux of *samsāra*, I had perforce to take many births. In the course of my wanderings in the maze of *samsāra* as the result of my own *karmas*, I attained by chance birth as a human being ; which might be the gateway to heaven, to liberation, to birth among the lower creation or, again, to birth as a human being. And having seen in this very life that men and women who lead the family life strive for the attainment of happiness and the avoidance of unhappiness, while the result is the opposite, I have withdrawn from the life of activity (23-25).

‘The nature of the *jīva* is bliss. It shines of itself when all activity is given up. And realizing that enjoyments are but fantasies indulged in by the mind, I desist from all activity, while passively experiencing the results of past *karma*. Forgetting that the highest good, the Bliss of the Self, is within himself, man is involved in *samsāra* with its endless suffering and infinite diversity, by reason of his obsession with duality, unreal though it is. As the ignorant man who, thirsting for water, ignores it where it is to be found, because it is hidden by the things that grow in it, and runs after a mirage, so does he who imagines that the supreme good is something other than his essential Self. The man who seeks for happiness and the cessation of misery through the body and other means, which are in the hands of fate, finds, when the gods are against him, that his repeated endeavours are of no avail. And what would be the use of wealth or the fulfilment of his desires, achieved with infinite pains, for the man who is doomed to die and who is never free from the afflictions caused by the body or other agency ? I see the anxieties and worries that plague rich men, who are miserly and have not attained

self-control, who cannot sleep of nights from fear, and who suspect everybody of designs on their wealth. Men who cling to their life and wealth go in fear of the king, the thief, the enemy, their own relations, even birds and beasts; they fear beggars, death, and their very selves. The wise man should renounce his attachment to life and wealth which is the cause of grief, infatuation, fear, anger, hankering, despondency, fatigue, and so on (26-33).

‘In the honey-bee and the python I have found the best instructors in the world, having obtained from their example a lesson in distaste for the world and in contentment. It is from the bee that I have learnt to give up all pleasures, finding that the man who accumulates wealth, undergoing hardships, as the bee does honey, may be killed by another and his hoard taken away from him. Like the python I remain inactive and contented with what I get by chance; and if I do not get anything, lie with quiet courage and fortitude, fasting for days on end. I eat such food as I get, which is sometimes little, sometimes much; it may be palatable or unpalatable, rich or poor. Sometimes, I am offered food with all respect, at other times it is given to me with contumely. On some days, I eat a second time, after having eaten already; but there are days when I get food only in daytime or only at night. Enjoying the fruits of *karma*, I contentedly wear what I happen to get; it may be silk, fine linen, deer-skin, a rag or tree-bark. Sometimes I lie down on the bare ground, or on grass, leaves, stone or ashes; at other times on a bed of down spread on a cot in a great mansion, if somebody else so decides. Sometimes I have my bath, rub my body with unguents, clothe myself in splendid raiment, adorn myself with a wreath, and move about riding in a chariot, on horseback, or by elephant. But there are times when I go about naked as a ghost. I neither blame nor praise men, who are by nature of the most diverse dispositions. But I wish them all well, and pray that they may all become one with the Lord (Vishnu) (34-42).

‘In order to achieve such equanimity, one should merge the sense of difference in the mental activity

that perceives it, that activity in the mind which confounds one thing with another, the mind in the *sāttvika* aspect of the ego, and that in *Māyā*. The sage, having come to realize the truth, should merge *Māyā* in the self-luminous *Brahma*, and cease from all activity, established in the Bliss of the Self. Because you are devoted to the Lord, I have described to you my way of life, which diverges from the way of the world and of the *Sāstra*, though it is kept screened from the view of ordinary men' (43-45).

Nārada said: Having heard the sage expound the Dharma of the great renouncers, the ruler of the Asuras, who was greatly pleased, worshipped him and went home, taking leave of him (46).

CHAPTER XIV

THE DUTIES OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Yudhishtira said: Tell me, divine sage, how the householder, who like me is infatuated with the domestic life, may easily attain this state (of the *Paramahamsas*) (1).

Nārada replied: Living the householder's life and duly discharging the duties and dedicating the fruits to *Vāsudeva*, he should wait upon great sages, O King. Whenever he can find time, he should hear attentively, again and again, the nectar-sweet stories of the incarnations of the Lord in the company of men who have attained peace (by devotion to Him). By virtue of such association with the good, he should be able to wean himself gradually from his attachment to the body, to his wife, children, and so on, who in any case, will be separated from him in due course like one who has awakened from a dream. Attending to the needs of his own body and of his household to the bare extent necessary, the wise man should cultivate inner detachment, while remaining outwardly attached to his body, home and possessions, and living in the world of men like one of them. He should disinterestedly approve whatever his kinsmen, parents, sons, brothers, friends or others might propose or wish (2-6).

He should discharge all these duties, utilizing such wealth as Achyuta grants, whether it be grain produced by rain, or wealth obtained from the ground, or chance gains. Men are entitled to regard as their own just what would suffice to satisfy their hunger. Whoever would appropriate more to himself is a thief, and should be punished as such. One should look upon such creatures as the deer, the camel, the ass, the monkey, rats, reptiles, birds and flies as if they were one's own progeny; for what is the difference between them and these? Even while living as a householder, a man should not go to great pains to gain the three ends of life, but be content with what the gods provide at any place, or any time. With everyone, including dogs, fallen men and *chandālas*, one should share justly the things that all desire. This applies even to the legitimate services of one's only wife, though the wife is regarded by all men as peculiarly the possession of the husband. The man who discards the sense of possession in the woman for whose sake men are prepared to cast away their lives, or even murder their father or teacher—that man has even the Invincible Lord in thrall. Ah! how far is this worthless body, which ends up as worm, ordure or ash, or the wife in whom one delights on its account, from the *Ātman* which hides the sky by its glory! (7-13).

One should sustain life on the remnants of food got by chance, after having made the daily sacrificial offerings. The wise man who does not look upon what is surplus to these requirements as his property, attains the goal of the supreme renouncers. With the wealth obtained by the pursuit of his lawful vocation, a man should propitiate every day the gods, the sages, men, other creatures, the manes, and his own self, thus offering worship to the Lord, the Inner Ruler in all creatures. If he should command the necessary qualifications and means needed for the offering of sacrifices, he should offer the sacrifices, Agnihotra and the rest, according to the modes prescribed in the manuals of ritual. But the exalted Lord, the Consumer-of-the-oblations, is not so well pleased with the offerings made to Him in the fire as with the offerings in the form of

food given to the Brahmanas, O King. Therefore worship the Lord, the Inner Ruler, by offering what is pleasing to the gods, to the Brahmanas first among men, and then to other men, and to all creatures according to their deserts (14-18).

A member of the twice-born classes should, if he has the means, offer, according to his capacity, the *śrāddha* of the dark half of the month (called the Mahālaya) in the month of Bhādrapada for the manes of his parents and their kin. He should offer *śrāddha* also on the days of the entry of the sun into the signs Cancer, Capricorn, Aries and Libra; on the occasion of the Vyatipāda and on the day within which a *tithi* begins and ends; at the time of the eclipse of the sun and the moon; on the twelfth day of the fortnight, and on the days when the constellations Śravaṇa, Dhanishtā, and Satabhisha rule; on the third day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha, on the ninth day of the same fortnight in Kārtika, and on the occasion of the *Ashtakas* in the four months comprised in the seasons Hemanta and Siśira; on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of Māgha; on the day of Purnami when the moon is at the full in the constellation Maghā; on the days when the asterisms that give their names to the different months are united with the full moon (Rākā) or with the moon when it is one digit less than full; when the constellations Anurādhā, Śravaṇa, Uttarā-phālguni or Uttarāshādhā or Uttarā-bhādrapada rule the twelfth day of the fortnight, or when the eleventh day of the fortnight has any of the three Uttara stars; also, on the day of one's natal star or when Śravaṇa rules (19-23).

The above-mentioned days are, too, propitious for the observance of Dharma, as acts of Dharma done then confer exceptional merit. Therefore one should strive one's best to do such acts, thus winning infinite good. The ritual bath taken on those days, the *japa* done, the *homa* performed, the vows observed, the worship offered to the gods and the Brahmanas, and whatever offerings are made to the manes, the gods, men and other creatures, are productive of imperishable good. The occasion offered by the performance of sacraments for one's

wife, son or one's own self, by the cremation of the dead, the anniversary of death or the performance of any auspicious rite, should be utilized to do such acts conducive to welfare, O King (24-26).

And now I shall tell you of the places which are propitious for the observance of Dharma and other means of promoting one's own good. That is the most holy of places where a worthy recipient for gifts is available, for such a one is the very image of the Lord in Whom is the entire world of the moving and the non-moving. The place where there lives a Brahmana community endowed with austerities, knowledge and compassion, or where the worship of Hari in images is carried on, is the best place for gaining merit. Wherever there flow the rivers Gangā and the rest, famed in the Purāṇas, or there are lakes like the Pushkara and sacred places to which holy men resort, such as Kurukshetra, Gayaśiras, Prayāga, Pulahāśrama, Naimisha, Phālguna, Setu, Prabhāsa, Kuśasthali, Vārānasi, Mathurā, Pampā, Bindusaras, the hermitage of Narayana (Badari), Nandā, the hermitage of Sita and Rama, all the great mountains, Mahendra, Malaya and so on, O King—these are the most holy of places; and so are those where the images of Hari are permanently installed and worshipped. The man who seeks his own welfare should constantly resort to these places. The acts of charity done in them are productive of benefits many times multiplied (27-33).

The wisest of men, who are experts in judging who is the most deserving of honours, have been unanimous, O King, that it is Hari alone That is worthy of honour, since the entire world of the moving and the non-moving is constituted of Him. You will remember that in your sacrifice it was decided that Achyuta alone deserved primacy as the recipient of honours, though there were present gods, rishis, and men who by their attainments were supremely deserving, and even the sons of Brahmā (Sanaka and others). The cosmic egg, which teems with living creatures, may be looked upon as a great tree; and as Achuta is the root thereof, worship offered to Him brings satisfaction to all beings. The bodies of men, the lower creation, sages and gods were created by Him. Since He dwells in them as the Inner Ruler

and the individual soul, He is called the Purusha. In these various bodies, O King, the Lord manifests Himself in a greater or a lesser degree. Therefore men are regarded as pre-eminently fit to be the recipients of gifts and honours, and the more the light of knowledge shines in them the greater is their worth. Seeing that men tended to look down on each other, wise men in the Tretā and Dvāpara *yugas* established the worship of Hari's image. Thenceforward some have been offering worship to Hari invoked in an image, inspired by their great faith. But such worship will bring no fruit to those who hate other men. Among men, the Brahmana is regarded as most worthy of gifts, as he lives austere, possessing knowledge and contentment, and cherishes the Veda, which is the body of Hari, great King. Why, the Brahmanas, who purify the three worlds by the dust of their feet, are regarded by the Lord Krishna Himself, the Soul of the universe, with the reverence due to the Almighty (34-42).

CHAPTER XV

THE WAY TO EMANCIPATION

Nārada said : Some Brahmanas are devoted to the performance of *karma*, others to austerities, O King ; some are intent on studying the Veda, others on teaching it ; some few are absorbed in the pursuit of Jñāna and Yoga. He who wants his gifts to be productive of infinite benefit, should make the offerings intended for the propitiation of the manes (in the *śrāddha*) to the man who is devoted to enlightenment ; so, too, should be made the offerings intended for the gods. Where such men are not available, these gifts are to be made to the other classes aforesaid in the order of their worth. One should feed two in rites for the propitiation of the gods, and three in the ceremonies for the departed, or one only on each of these occasions. Even a rich man should not go in for too many guests in the *śrāddha*. For it will mean invitation to one's relations to partake of the food offerings. And (as then the number of invitees cannot well be limited) it would be impossible to ensure

that the materials needed and the right type of guests are available at the proper time and place, that the rite is performed with due zeal and the guests treated with all honour. Therefore, when the time and the place are suitable, such food as is fit for hermits, should, after being offered to Hari, be given to the deserving with faith and zeal, as is ordained. That would bring the giver not only all that he desires but everlasting good too. Dividing the available food among the gods, the sages, the manes, other creatures, one's own self and one's people, one should look upon all of them as the embodiments of the Supreme (1-6).

One who truly knows Dharma will not offer flesh in the *śrāddha* or eat it himself. Food prepared from forest produce will give (the manes) that supreme satisfaction which the slaughter of animals can never give. For men who aspire to adhere to the Dharma of the good, there is no greater Dharma than the renunciation of violence to living creatures in thought, word and deed. That is why men of enlightenment, who are free from desire and are foremost among those who understand the true significance of sacrifice, offer up ritual sacrifices in the fire of self-conquest, wherein the *Ātman* shines in all its splendour. All creatures dread the man who worships the Lord with sacrifices consisting of material offerings; they fear, 'This man will pitilessly slay me; for, not knowing the difference between the Self and the not-Self, he is intent only on pampering his appetite'. Therefore the man who knows Dharma should perform the daily obligatory rites and those occasioned by special circumstances, contentedly offering food from forest produce obtained by chance (7-11).

The man who knows Dharma should discard, as in fact Adharma, the five kinds of rites which (look like Dharma but) are the offshoots of Adharma. These are named *Vidharma*, *Para-dharma*, *Ābhāsa*, *Upamā* and *Cchala*. *Vidharma* is that which, though done under the impression that it is Dharma, constitutes a violation of one's own Dharma. *Para-dharma* is that which has been prescribed as obligatory for others (and is therefore irrelevant to oneself). *Upadharma* (or *Upamā*) is what is practised by heretics, or from the desire to impose

upon others ; while *Cchala* is based on dishonest interpretation of texts. The Dharma which is not comprehended among those prescribed for the different *āśramas*, but is arbitrarily adopted according to one's own whim and fancy, is *Abhāsa*. When and where has the Dharma enjoined on a man according to his natural bent been incapable of assuaging his sorrows and bringing him peace of mind ? (12-14).

The poor man should not seek wealth for the purpose of discharging his enjoined duties, or of maintaining himself. The inactivity of the man who has no desires will bring him what he requires to maintain life, as in the case of the python. How can the happiness which the contented man knows, because, delighting in the Self, he is inactive, be won by him who, greedy for pleasure, runs all over the world in pursuit of wealth ? All the directions hold nothing but happiness for the man who is always contented, even as the man who has foot-wear has no trouble from prickly pebble or thorn. Cannot the contented man subsist on anything, O King, even on water ? It is the wretched craving for sex and food that makes men behave like curs. The lustre, learning, austerities and fame of the Brahmana who knows no contentment, leak out, as it were, and all his power of discrimination is dimmed by the hankering that distracts the senses. All other desires are extinguished by hunger and thirst ; so is anger, when it is vented on the victim. But greed is not sated even when one has conquered and enjoyed the world in all the ten directions. Many learned men, O King, who have wide knowledge and can clear others' doubts, and some of whom even preside over assemblies of the learned, are undone by their lack of contentment (15-21).

One should overcome desire by resolutely turning one's face away from pleasure ; anger by abjuring desires ; greed, by realizing the menace that lurks in wealth ; fear by recollecting the truth (of the identity of all creatures) ; grief and infatuation by discriminating knowledge of the Self and the not-Self. One should free oneself from hypocrisy by cultivating the company of the saintly ; from the obstacles to yoga, by silence ; from the impulse to violence, by giving up the attach-

ment to the body and other possessions ; from pain inflicted by other creatures, by displaying compassion towards them ; from the afflictions caused by past *karma*, by the cultivation of equanimity ; and from bodily ills, by the power generated by yoga. One should get over one's addiction to sleep by using only *sāttvic* substances, overcome *rajas* and *tamas* by *sattva*, and *sattva* by the cultivation of dispassion. And all these things one can easily accomplish by devotion to the Guru. If a man harbours the evil notion that his Guru is a mere man, while in truth he is none other than the Lord Who endows him with the light of wisdom, all his knowledge will be thrown away on him, like the bath that is given to the elephant. Here is (Sri Krishna) the exalted Lord Himself, supreme over Prakṛti and Puruṣa, Whose feet are ever worthy of being sought by the master-yogis, and yet the world looks upon him as a mere man (22-27).

All the rules and injunctions laid down in the Veda have for their end the control of the senses and the mind. If that control does not lead to the consummation of yoga (through Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi), then all the disciplines aforesaid are so much labour wasted. Even as husbandry and other such occupations and the gains from them do not conduce to liberation, but on the contrary lead to involvement in *samsāra*, the offering of sacrifices and the execution of charitable works would bring no good to him who allows his senses to be distracted by the world (28-29).

The man who is resolved on controlling the mind should renounce all his former associations, give up all possessions, and betake himself to the solitary life, living as a lone mendicant, on a spare diet procured by begging. He should sit erect and comfortably on a secure seat placed in a pure and level place, reciting the syllable 'Om'. With his eyes bent on the tip of his nose, he should control his breath by breathing in, retaining the breath within and then expelling it by the practice of *Pūraka*, *Kumbhaka* and *Rechaka* ; doing this till the mind relinquishes all desires. Every time the mind, distracted by desire, begins to wander, the sagacious man should steadily retract it and confine it within the

heart. The mind of the ascetic who unintermittently practises this is stilled in a very short while, like fire that has consumed its fuel. The mind which is no longer disturbed by desires, and which has ceased from all activity, will never again be active, having known the Bliss of the Brahma (30-35).

The ascetic who, having departed from his home, the field where one sows the seeds of the three ends of life, returns to their enjoyment, is the shameless man who eats his own vomit. Do we not see worthless men who, having thought and spoken of the body as the not-Self and destined to end as ordure, worm or ash, revert to looking upon it as the Self and get others to sing its praises? The defaulting in his duties by the householder, the violation of his vows (of celibacy) by the young pupil, the hermit's return to the social life of the village, and the indulgence shown by the ascetic to the hankering senses—all these are to be condemned. Such men are unworthy of their *āśramas* and in fact caricature them. One should pity these men deluded by the Māyā of the Lord and ignore them. If a man had realized his identity with the Para Brahma, why should he, whose heart should have been cleansed of the residual impressions of *Karma*, still hanker after pleasures and pamper the body? What could he have to gain by that? (36-40)

The body has been compared to a chariot, the senses to its horses, the mind which controls the senses to the reins, the objects of the senses to the destination of the chariot, the intellect to the driver, the 'chitta' (that holds the body together, according to the will of the Lord), to the bands of the chariot, the ten vital airs to the axle-tree, Dharma and Adharma to the wheels, and the *jīva*, characterized by the ego, to the rider in the chariot. The *Prāṇava* is spoken of as the bow, the pure *jīva* as the arrow, and the Supreme Brahma as the target. Love, hate, cupidity, grief, delusion, fear, conceit, arrogance, mortification, deceitfulness, cruelty, spitefulness, passionate addiction, heedlessness, hunger and sleep—these and the like are the enemies to be vanquished. Most of these have their origin in *rajas* and *tamas*, but some spring from *sattva* too. While yet a man has the body for a chariot, with all its fighting equip-

ment under his control, he should quell his enemies with the sword of knowledge sharpened by assiduous service to great teachers, and drawing his strength from Achyuta. Having thus won tranquillity and entered on the enjoyment of the Bliss of the Self, he should discard the body and all else. If he does not put his reliance in Hari, the outward ranging senses and the wayward intellect will lure him into the wrong track and land him amidst those robbers, the pleasures of the senses. And these will push him along with his horses and charioteer, into the blind well of *samsāra*, dark as hell, where he is threatened by death every moment (41-46).

The *karmas* prescribed by the Vedas are of two kinds, those that lead to activity and those that lead to withdrawal from the world. By doing the former kind of *karma* one is reborn again and again, while by following the latter one attains liberation. Any rite involving violence, or any sacrifice where many materials are required, such as the Agnihotra, Darśa, Pūrnāmāsa, Chāturmāsya, the animal sacrifice and the sacrifice in which offerings of Soma juice are made, and also the Vaiśvadeva rite, and the rite in which 'bali' is offered—all these are Vedic rites known collectively as 'Ishta'. If these are done from the desire for the fruits thereof, and are thus not calculated to promote peace of mind, they must be designated as 'Pravṛtta' and will make for further involvement in the world. 'Pūrta' includes the building of temples and the making of gardens, the digging of wells and the construction of water-sheds for wayfarers (47-49).

Equipped¹ with the subtle body that results from the substances offered as oblations in the sacrifice, the *jīva* who has followed the way of involvement in the world, goes accompanied successively by the deities presiding over¹ 'the smoky way', the night, the dark fortnight, and the period of the sun's progress south of the equator, to the world of Soma (the moon-god). When (the enjoyment of the pleasures of that world is exhausted and) that body disappears, the *jīva* passes through rain

¹ This and the next paragraph somewhat expand the original verses in translating them, since they, following B. G. VIII 23-28, are elliptical and do not yield their full meaning at sight.

into a shrub or annual, then into a grain of corn, and (when that is eaten by somebody) into the semen (of that person). Such, O King, is 'the way of the manes', which leads to rebirth. Having passed through every one of the stages above described, in due order, he is born again. This is the way trodden by the Brahmana who has undergone all the sacraments relating to the different stages, from the nuptial union of the parents to the cremation ground, which are prescribed for the members of the twice-born classes (50-52).

The *jīva* who is devoted to the way of withdrawal offers into the fire of the senses the rites performed by the organs of action; the senses into the mind that thinks and purposes ends to itself; the mind, with its different modes, into speech; speech into the body of articulate sounds; that into the triple sound, the *Pranava*; the latter into the *Bindu* (half-syllable); the *Bindu* into the *Nāda*; the *Nāda* into the *Sūtrātmā*, and the *Sūtrātmā* into the *Brahma*. The *jīva* who has followed the way of withdrawal is accompanied, on his death, by the deities, one after the other, presiding over fire, the sun, the day, the last quarter of the day, the last day of the bright fortnight and the period of the sun's progress north of the equator, to the world of *Brahmā*. (When its enjoyment of that world has been exhausted), *Viśva*, the soul which has the gross body for its adjunct, merges it in the subtle body and becomes *Taijasa*. *Taijasa*, which has the subtle body for its adjunct, merges it in the causal body and becomes *Prājña*. *Prājña*, which has the causal body for its adjunct, merges it in the Witness (the *Sākshi-chaitanya*) and becomes the fourth (Transcendent). When the various adjuncts have thus been merged, the pure *Ātman* stands alone. (In other words, the *jīva* attains liberation). The *Veda* describes this as the way of the gods. The man who has been freed from likes and dislikes and who worships the *Ātman*, follows this path, and having passed through the stages above described, attains the *Ātman* and is established in It, and never more returns, unlike others who go and come again and again (52-55).

The man who sees with the eye of *Sāstra* the truth of these two ways, governed by the manes and the gods

respectively, which are clearly distinguished by the Veda, does not succumb to infatuation, even though he is burdened with the body. The One Reality, Which is the cause of bodies' coming into existence, and Which survives them; likewise, the world of experience and the experiencer; the things that are high as well as the things that are low; knowledge as well as its objects; words and what they signify; and darkness as well as light—all these are none other than the *jñāmi* who has realized the truth. Just as all simulacra, though logic tells you that they are unreal, seem real, so all objects that are comprehended by the senses of perception seem real, while in truth they are not real, and it is impossible that they should be real (56-58).

For, the body, and other similar entities, though they seem to be a complex of the five gross elements, are in truth neither collocations (as a wood is a collocation of trees), nor compounds created from the elements, nor modifications of them. They are neither wholly distinct from the parts, nor are they present in every one of the parts (either integrally or partly). So these wholes are really the product of illusion. The gross elements, in their turn, being wholes, cannot exist without the subtle elements of which they are by proposition formed; but as the wholes have been shown to be illusory, the parts also must be illusory (59-60).

So long and only so long as diversity is seen in the Paramātmān because of nescience, the erroneous notion that you 'remember having seen so and so before' persists. Rule and prohibition (based on the Veda) are valid in the state of nescience, as the dreamer in his dream entertains the notions of sleeping and waking. The contemplative, training his mind to practise 'Bhāvādvaita', 'Kriyādvaita' and 'Dravyādvaita', overcomes the three 'dreams'² in this very life by Self-realization. 'Bhāvādvaita' is the realization of the identity of the effect with the cause, as for example, that of the cloth with the warp and woof, this conclusion being arrived at from the consideration that diversity is in truth an illusion. The dedication of the fruits of all that one does in thought, word and deed to the Supreme

² The states of waking and deep sleep, as well as that of dream.

Brahma, O son of Prthā, is called 'Kriyādvaita'. The realization of the truth that the wealth and goods, and the enjoyments, which one regards as belonging to oneself or to one's wife and children or to any other living being, should in fact be regarded as equally the due of all, constitutes Dravyādvaita (59-65).

A man shall perform rites which are obligatory, O King, at the time and place enjoined, using prescribed materials, got from sources, and by means, which are unobjectionable. He should not do otherwise except in emergencies. Discharging these and other duties enjoined on him by the Veda, the man who has devotion to Krishna will, even though he lives as a householder, assuredly attain Him. Just as you, O mighty King, emerged victorious over the formidable phalanx of perils that assailed you, and vanquishing (all your opponents right up to) the elephants of the quarters, offered sacrifices—doing all this by virtue of worshipping the lotus feet of the all-powerful Lord (Krishna), the Ruler of your hearts—even so shall you (putting yourselves into His hands) cross the formidable sea of *samsāra* (61-68).

In the last Mahākālpa, I was a Gandharva of the name of Upabarhaṇa and was much esteemed by the Gandharvas. The women were head over ears in love with me, delighting in looking at me because of my beauty and charm, the sweetness of my speech and the fragrance I exuded. But I was always drunk, and exceedingly uxorious. Once, when the gods were assembled in a long *Sattra*, the Patriarchs summoned the companies of Gandharvas and Apsarases to sing the tales of Hari. Hearing of it, I too went there singing, surrounded by women. The Patriarchs resented this as an insult, and laid upon me a curse backed by their extraordinary power. They said, 'For thus insulting us, you shall, bereft of your lustre, be instantly degraded into a Sūdra.' And I was forthwith born into this world as the son of a Sūdra servant-maid. But even in that birth I achieved, by virtue of service to Brahmanas well-versed in the Vedas, and association with them, the status of a son of Brahmā (69-73).

I have now described to you the Dharmas incumbent on the householder, which free him from all sins. By

adhering to them he may easily attain the goal of the renouncers. You are among the most blessed of mortals, since the sages who purify the world come to your house from everywhere because there lives among you One Who is the Para Brahma in human guise. This uncle's son of yours, your beloved friend and well-wisher, your very Self, and worthy of all honour at your hands, who does your will and is your mentor, is none other than the Brahma, the Intuition of unconditioned Bliss, Which is the goal of the great. May He, the Lord of the devotees, the essential truth of Whom has not been discerned and described even by Bhava, Brahmā and others, be gracious to us, propitiated by our devotion and tranquillity (74-77).

Srī Suka concluded his narration thus: Having heard what the celestial sage said, the foremost of the Bharatas was greatly pleased. And he worshipped him and Krishna also, his heart in a tumult of love. Receiving those honours, the sage took leave of Krishna and the son of Pṛthā, and went his way. Hearing Krishna declared as none other than the Supreme Brahma, the son of Pṛthā was filled with wonder. And now I have told you all about the different families of the daughters of Daksha, by whom the whole world of the moving and the non-moving was peopled (78-80).

(Here ends the *Seventh Book of Srimad-Bhāgavatam*).

COMMENTARIES

Next to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* is perhaps the most extensively commented upon of all the sacred books of Hinduism. Every school of philosophic thought has sought to expound it from its own stand-point. Among the theistic schools, the Chaitanya and Vallabhāchārya Sampradāyas accord it a very high place among the basic texts. Seven of these commentaries have been regarded by their respective schools as the most authoritative. These, along with some other commentaries which are frequently cited in this book, are listed below with the abbreviations that distinguish them.

1. *Bhāgavata-Bhāvārtha-Dīpikā* of Śrīdhara-swāmin (S.).
2. *Sukapaksha-samākhya* of Sudarśana Sūri (*Sukapaksh*). 3. *Bhāgavata-Chandra-Chandrikā* of Sri Veeraraghavacharya (R). 4. *Pada-ratnāvali* of Śrī Vijayadhwaja Tīrtha (M). 5. *Kramasandharbha* and *Bṛhat-Krama-Sandarbha* of Jīva-Goswami (*Kram* and *Bṛkram*).
6. *Vaiṣṇava-Toshini* of Jīva Goswami (*Tosh*). (Items 5 and 6 are often indicated by the common symbol J). 7. *Sārārtha-Darśinī* of Viṣṇuātha Chakravartī (V.C.). 8. *Subodhinī* of Śrī Vallabhacharya (V.). 9. *Siddhanta-Pradīpa* of Sri Sukadeva (N).

No. 1 by Śrīdharaswami is the best known, though not perhaps the oldest of the commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam*. He was a *sannyasin* and an Advaitin (13th century), as well as a great Bhakta. His commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Vishnu Purana* are well known. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu regarded him with great respect. Many of the commentators belonging to other schools are, in regard to matters on which they do not differ, content to endorse him either expressly or by simply reproducing his comment word for word.

Nos. 2 and 3 represent the Rāmānuja-sampradāya (Viśishtadvaita). No. 2 is older and much briefer than No. 3, which usually elaborates the former. No. 4 is written from the Madhva stand-point. The text followed by the Madhvas is conspicuous for its substantial additions to, and a comparatively smaller number of omissions from what might be called the Vulgate. It has also the largest number of variant readings.

The works under 5 and 6 are by a younger contemporary of Chaitanya, founder of Gaudīya-Vaiṣṇavism (*Achintya-Bhedābheda*). Son of Rūpa and nephew of Sanātana, who were the immediate disciples of Chaitanya and popularisers of the cult, his thought has less affinity with the Madhva view-point than that of later philosophers of the school like Baladeva Upādhyāya. No. 7 (Viṣṇuātha) is generally in sympathy with the Chaitanya school, though he sometimes takes an independent line.

No. 8 represents the Suddhādvaita school of Śrī Vallabhācharya. *Subodhinī* is however incomplete. His successors have elaborated on and supplemented his work.

No. 9 represents the Nimbārka school (Hamsa Sampradāya). Vamśīdhara's *Bhāvārthā-Dīpikā-Prakāśa* and Radhāramana Goswami's *Dīpini*, the *Bālāprabodhini* of Giridharalala Goswami and the *Bhaktamanoranjani* of Bhagavatpādācharya, are also drawn upon occasionally in the Notes.

NOTES*

BOOK I (pp. 1-79)

CH. I. P. 1 (1) The invocatory verse has been differently interpreted by commentators belonging to different schools of thought. The translation follows S, who himself offers a number of alternatives in regard to different parts of the verse. Thus, in place of 'the semblance of truth', a variant reading would give the meaning, 'the objective world is false, in spite of its being grounded in the Brahma'. And the words translated as 'It being . . . existence', may also be rendered as 'It enters everything as the cause, and is different from all effects'. 'It . . . objects': i.e. as *Sat*. 'The three-fold creation' are the elements, sense faculties and gods presiding over them.

Some of the other comments are summarised here. *R*: 'Let us meditate on the absolute Truth, the Brahma (the Supreme Lord endowed with all auspicious attributes); from Whom proceed the creation etc. of the universe, He being present as the material cause in all creatures, and (since He is different from Prakṛti and Puruṣa) as their Controller, and also as the efficient cause; Who is omniscient (and omnipotent) and independent (being beyond the sway of Karma); Who revealed to Brahmā by a mere thought the Veda, without the help of which even the learned (like Kapila) are unable to comprehend the glory of the Lord; Who was responsible for the first combining of fire, water and earth; for Whom the creation by the *guṇas* does not really exist; and Who by His Glory repels every thing that might delude the understanding'.

M: 'Let us meditate on that Truth (experience of unmixed Bliss), the Lord (Narayana) endowed with every excellence, to Whom is due the creation etc., of the universe (as well as its knowledge and ignorance, its freedom and liberation), as is known from Śruti and Smṛti and also from other sources such as Logic; Who knows all that there is to be known about all that exists; Who is Self-luminous (or independent); Who out of His kindness revealed the Veda to Brahmā, the first seer; without Whose grace all the enlightened souls from Brahmā downwards, who were, are, or will be, would be utterly confounded; for Whom the creation of *jīva*, *Īśvara* and *jada*, like that of fire, water and earth, has no value (though it, like the world, the product of fire, water and earth, has practical utility and therefore is not *mithyā*); Who eternally repels Māyā (with her conjurer's tricks) by the intelligence that is His essence'.

Ĵ: Let us contemplate the Supreme Lord, Who is the Intuition of Bliss and the Granter of salvation; from Whom proceeds the creation etc. of the universe, He being present in all that is, and not in what is non-existent; Who is Omniscient and Self-luminous; Who revealed the Vedas to the first seer; in Whom the threefold creation is real, as is the fractional presence of fire, water and earth in each other; Who by His innate Power repels the delusion caused by Māyā (in the *jīva*).

V: 'Let us meditate on (or love) the Supreme and Indefeasible Truth (Puruṣottama), Who by His own effulgence eternally repels

*The marginal numbers refer to the page of the English text and the number of the verse in the original Sanskrit. The guide-words should help locate the verse in the paragraph containing it.

the delusion that He is conditioned by body, organs or mind ; from Whom proceed the creation, etc. of the universe, He being present in it as the material and efficient cause ; Who is Omniscient (bringing the world into being for fulfilling the ends of the *jīvas*) and Self-luminous ; Who revealed to Brahmā, by the prompting of the mind, the Veda which confounds the learned ; to Whom (in His *avatāras*, and so on) is falsely attributed the body, mind and faculties, as the appearance of fire, water and earth in each other is false.

N : 'Let us meditate on that Satya (the Supreme Lord), the Origin of the universe, the material and efficient cause of its creation etc. ; Who is Omniscient in regard to the multifarious and marvellous creation ; Who is self-luminous, and Who revealed the Veda to (Brahmā) the first seer ; Whom even learned men are unable to know, and are thus confounded ; in Whom the threefold creation is real, like the changes that fire, water and earth undergo (as sparks, bubbles, and pots and pans), being the transformation of the real ; but Who by reason of His own effulgence remains wholly untouched by the defects of all the products of the three *gunas*.

(2) 'The . . . contemplative' : R. 'The great sage' (Vyāsa). 'the . . . Dharma' : R. 'Bhakti' ; M. 'the Nivṛtti Dharma, also Bhakti'. 'the highest Reality' : R. 'the Paramātmān'.

(3) 'even . . . release' : R. 'to the close of life' ; M. 'till the fall of the *linga śarīra*'.

P. 2 (7) 'Saguṇa and Nirguṇa' : R. 'Brahma as well as Prakṛti and Puruṣa' ; M. 'Those who know Brahma, and the like of us', or, 'those who know times past, present and future' ; N. 'Sabda-Brahma and Param-Brahma'.

(8) 'their grace' ; R. 'the grace of Vyāsa'.

P. 3 (14) 'Fear' : R. and M. (*v. r.*) '*samsāra*' ; J. 'Mahākāla' ; V. 'the Bhaya that executes Yama's orders' (see Bk. IV Ch. 27) or 'Dvaita-dṛṣhti' ('the seeing of difference').

(17) 'various forms' : R. and M. take this to refer to other incarnations of Krishna ; J. to all the three classes of avatārs (*Puruṣa*, *Guṇa* and *Līlā*). V. interprets it as meaning that the Lord in every exploit displays a new aspect of His fascinating personality.

(20) 'glory . . . exterior' : J. 'The Lord in human form has no material body, though He looks as if He had. He is the Supreme Being in human shape performing human deeds'.

(23) 'shield . . . Dharma' : M. (*v. r.*) : 'Whose doings were of the nature of righteousness.' R. (purport) : 'Now that Krishna is gone, Dharma is left defenceless, and so men must take refuge in the tales of the Lord that destroy Kali'.

'abides in His own essence' : R. and V. : 'in Vaikuntha'.

CH. II. P. 4. (4) M. takes 'the goddess' as referring to Lakṣmī, 'Nara' to Sesha, 'Narottama' to Vāyu.

(5) 'mind' : R. '*chittam*' ; N. '*jīva*' ; V. 'Krishna'.

(9 and 10) 'No material . . . Truth' : S. 'The Dharma spoken of here is the 'highest Dharma' of vs. 6, that which promotes 'Nivṛtti'. The Dharma expounded in such famous formulations as the *Bhārata-*

Śāvitṛī is the 'Pravṛtti Dharma', which governs the work-a-day world and which teaches that the Dharma (practised with a view to its benefits) is productive of *Artha* and *Kāma* and so should be pursued. The 'Nivṛtti Dharma', on the contrary, produces Bhakti as the result of 'vairāgya' and 'Jñāna'; and Bhakti brings Mukti.

R. (purport): 'Where there is wealth it should be used for garnering disinterested Dharma, and that should be used for promoting the Bhakti-yoga that is the means to *moksha*.' M: 'The fruits of Karma, in the form of love of the stories of the Lord, are not reaped by the *jīva* who is not anxious to know the truth (about the Lord) (and who does not therefore dedicate them to the Lord)'. J. equates Bhakti (unconditional devotion) with Mukti and says that such Bhakti, of which Jñāna is an incidental fruit, is itself the supreme gain. V. suggests that wealth, earned by any means, might be used to garner Dharma, but Dharma can never be productive of wealth for an aspirant to liberation.

P. 5 (11) 'Reality . . . Non-dual Consciousness': S. says this is to be seen in the 'Kshetrajña'; it is the Paramātmān. The Vedāntists know It as Brahma, the Yogis as Paramātmā and the Sātvatas as Vishnu. R. would render it as meaning 'that which has Jñāna for its essence or is characterized by Jñāna; and there is nothing that is its equal or superior'. He holds that all the three names connote the Lord. The Bhaktas see Him immediately as the Antarātmā seated in the Jīvātmā; this is Moksha. 'Jñāna' is the Jñāna-yoga that realizes the true nature of the individual soul.

J. maintains that Vyāsa does not describe the *jīva* as the Reality mentioned in vs. 11. He renders 'Advayam Jñānam' as 'undivided Consciousness, one and indivisible'. Bhagavān, Who has His *svarūpa*, *jīva*, and Māyā *śaktis*, is perceived in the heart by the Bhakti characterized by 'prema' and attended by its progeny, 'Jñāna' and 'vairāgya'.

V. renders 'Jñānam Advayam' as 'the knowledge that dispels the notion of duality'.

(18) 'almost . . . cleansed': 'Sins are totally abolished only with the dawn of knowledge' (S.); 'only with the destruction of the subtle body' (M.).

P. 7 (30 and 31.) R. (purport): 'The seen world was, before creation, but the Lord Himself; Who, utilizing His own Māyā, His body, changed into the world of effects from the Mahat to the earth. He pervades it as the Inner Ruler, Himself remaining untouched by the *guṇas* of that Māyā, and creates the worlds of beings. And in these products of Māyā, He appears as the *jīva*, having the *jīva* for His body and controlling it as the Inner Ruler; and thus entering all bodies, He appears as if he were conditioned by the *guṇas* (of the *jīvas* and the bodies)'. M: 'Vāsudeva Himself, the all-pervading, while remaining untouched by the *guṇas*, at the beginning created the world, His own free will being the efficient cause, while Prakṛti, which manifests itself as the seen and the unseen, is the material cause. Entering the products of His Māyā, He is looked upon by the ignorant as the *jīva*, while in truth He is full of *Vijñāna* and is thus able to control the *jīva*'.

(32) *S.* 'The seeming manifoldness might refer to the Lord as the Inner Ruler, or to the Kshetraja'.

(33)'; 'the subtle elements': *R.* 'the gross and the subtle elements'. 'enjoys': *S.*'s *alt.* 'enables the *jīva* to enjoy'; *R.* 'The Lord does this through the *jīvas*'; *M.* 'He enjoys only such *guṇas* as Bliss.'

CH. III. P. 7 (1 & 2) *S.* The form described here is that of the 'Viraj' (the cosmic body). The intention is that it should serve as a support for meditation on the Lord, the Inner Ruler.

R. The Lord has two forms; one with the *jīva* and the psycho-physical complex formed by Prakṛti and its evolutes, from which is evolved the cosmic egg; this is described in vs. 1; the other, known as Aniruddha, and constituted of pure *sattva*, is described in vs. 2.

M. The Lord who during 'Pralaya' was hid behind its darkness now drank up that darkness and revealed His unique Self as the Purāṇapurusha. This is what is meant by His 'taking the form of Purusha'. He created Mahat, etc., had the cosmic egg evolved by them, entered it and lay on the water therein on Sesha, His couch; from His navel sprang the lotus in which Brahmā appeared.

Ĵ. speaks of three Purushas: (1) the Creator of Mahat, (2) He who lay inside the egg, and (3) the spirit in all living beings.

'Yoga-samādhi': *V.* Yoga-Nidrā is a certain power of the Lord which destroys the sufferings of *jīvas*. 'unexcelled Sattva': 'Sattva which is not tranquil but poised ready for creative work'. 'His limbs': *R.* 'The limbs of Brahmā'.

(5) 'by those... Purusha': *R.* 'by means of fractions of His parts i.e. *chit* and *achit*'.

P. 8 (6) 'The self-same God...': *R.* 'The self-same Lord, animating Brahmā, was first incarnate as Sanaka, and so on'. *M.* renders Brahmā as 'brahmitah' (filled with power). He thinks that 'Sanat-kumāra' is different from the member of the quartet so named.

Ĵ. This is the second Purusha (see under (2) above).

(7) 'so that... existence': *R.* 'for the protection of the good'. *M.* 'for maintaining the universe'.

(8) 'by a knowledge... bondage': *R.* (purport): 'The Pāṇcharātra teaches that Karmas done by those who follow Nivṛitti-mārga do not make for *samsāra*'. *M.* 'By 'anushtāna' as prescribed by Sātvata Tantra, 'karmas' will promote 'moksha'. He says that the third incarnation was as Mahidāsa, who taught the Pāṇcharātra to Narada and others. *V.* would render 'Naishkarmya' as 'the destruction of the tendency of 'karmas' to proliferate.'

(9) *M.* 'While Narayana was the incarnation, Nara was the 'viseshā-āveśa'. *V.* agrees. *Ĵ.* 'Nara, a sage, Narayana, the God'.

(11) 'born of Anasūyā': *M.* and *N.* 'as desired by Anasūyā'.

P. 9 (15) *S.* says that this is only a Māyic *Pralaya*, since there is no *Pralaya* at the end of a Manvantara. But *Ĵ.* and *V.* dispute this.

P. 10 (27-28) *S.* and *Ĵ.* : Incarnations are of two main kinds, *amśa* and *āveśa*. The first is direct descent with a fraction of Himself by the Lord, as in the case of Matsya, Kūrma, etc. The second is the imbuing of a *jīva* with some of the powers and attributes of the Lord.

Where these are small, the *āveśa* is 'kalā' or 'vibhūti', as in the case of the patriarchs. Where it is big, it is *amśa*, as in that of Sanaka, Nārada and so on. But Krishna is not an *avatāra* of Bhagavān or of the Puruṣa. He is the Lord Himself.

'Kalāh': *M*: 'bhinna-amśas', spoken of in the Smṛtis; *V*: 'imbued with the Dharma (special virtue) of the Lord'.

R. renders 'amśa-kalāh' as 'sprung from a fraction of a fraction of Aniruddha'. This is contrasted with 'plenary incarnation with all the six attributes'. It means the manifestation, through the *jīva*, by the Inner Ruler of some special opulence, quality or power. *M*: 'amśa-kalāh': These are the Lord Himself.

(30) 'the Ātman (the jīva)': *R*. 'the Paramātmān'; *Ṣ*. 'the jīva'. *V*. takes 'body' to refer to the cosmic body of the plenary Brahma.

(32) *R*. and *M*. take this verse to refer to the *jīva* (who has all the attributes described here) and who is reborn again and again by reason of his entanglement with Prakṛti. So too, does *V*. who regards the *jīva* as a subtle adjunct of the Lord.

(33) *Ṣ*. 'This verse refers to communion with the Supreme Lord, which is the final liberation of the spirit'.

(35) 'Who in truth... activity': *R*. 'Whose birth is not due to "karma" and Whose deeds produce neither *punya* nor *pāpa*'. *M*. 'Who is different from the creature ('jana'), and is a doer, but not dependent on others (or not with any object in view).

Ṣ. 'Hṛt-pateh': "He who is beyond all intellectual faculties".

(36) 'the Controller... sense faculties': *R*. 'Possessor of Jñāna, Śakti, Bala, Aśvarya, Virya and Tejas'.

'smells... afar': *R*. 'enjoys the delights of 'līlā' through the organs, but unlike the *jīva*, unmixed with misery'.

P. 11 (38) 'sincere devotion': *R*. 'devotion free from desire, etc.,'

39. 'absorbed... thoughts': *M*. interprets *ātmabhāvam* as 'the relationship of master and servant'.

CH. IV. P. 12 (4) 'transcended all difference': *R*. 'does not attribute to the *ātman* the differences found in bodies'; *M*. 'makes no difference between 'mine' and 'not mine'. 'his mind... One'; *V*. 'who sought seclusion and dreaded attachments'.

(5) The incident is referred to in *Mbh.* XII: 353. 'no longer... cow': one-eighth of a *muhūrta*.

P. 13 (22) 'the cruel sage': *R*. renders 'Dāruṇa' as 'son of Daruṇa, a sage'; *M*. 'son of Varuṇa'.

P. 14 (30) 'and my *jīva*... perfect': *S*. (*alt.*) 'my *jīva*, in spite of its lustre gained by Vedic learning, seems wholly bad and unredeemed'; *R*. 'though full of Vedic lustre, it seems to lack it, like any evil man'; *Ṣ*. 'though endowed with knowledge by nature'.

'does not seem... self': *R*. 'seems to remain unfulfilled'; *M*. 'my soul does not seem to have achieved the objects of my incarnation'; *Ṣ*. 'my soul does not seem to have acquired the felicity that comes from attaining the Supreme Lord'.

CH. V. P. 15 (4) 'engaged... It': *R*., *M*., *N*. and *V*.: 'The eternal Veda has been learnt and its import investigated by you'.

(6) 'Controller . . . effect': *R.* 'He to whom Brahmā and others are subordinate'; *M.* 'Controller over liberated and unliberated souls', (10) *S.* 'crows' stands for men avid for pleasure, 'swans of Mānasa' for the Paramahamsas who abide in the Brahma.

Pp. 15-16 (12) 'Even . . . karma': *R.* 'the knowledge which comes of meditation on the Ātman'.

P. 17 (20) *R.* 'The Lord, though not separate from the world, is different from it'; *M.* 'The Lord, though like the world, is not the world but different from it'.

P. 18 (27) *R.* 'When I began to feel such delight in the Lord, the conviction was borne in upon me that the world of cause and effect (the body) was formed upon me, whom the Lord upholds, by Prakṛti, which is connected with Him (the Self)'. *M.* 'As the result of unintermittent worship I discovered that the world of cause and effect was created, maintained and destroyed in Himself of His own free will by the perfect Lord Hari as Antaryāmin, whose image I am'.

'the world . . . effect': *Ṣ.* 'The world composed of Vyashti and Samashti. I realized that the 'vyashti' was imposed on me, the *jīva*, and the 'samashti' on the Para Brahma'.

(32) 'to the exalted . . . perfect': *Ṣ.* 'to the Paramātmā, or the Bhagavān, or the Brahma'.

P. 19 (39) 'Knowing . . . taught': *M.* (v. r.) 'Knowing that I had been faithful to my prescribed duties'.

knowledge . . . powers': *M.* 'knowledge of Īśvara'.

CH. VI. P. 20 (16) 'On the Parmātmā': *M.* 'On the individual soul'. (There are 3 extra verses in *M.* after verse 16, describing the nature of the three states of waking, dream and sleep).

(18) 'I saw . . . Lord': *R.* 'I saw neither the body nor the Ātman'; *M.* 'I saw only Him, not any other like Him or better'; *N.* 'I saw neither contemplator nor the Object of contemplation'.

(20) 'distracted': *R.* 'like one who is avid for pleasure'; *M.* 'like a man who is ill'.

P. 21 (26) 'Ruler . . . invisible': *R.* 'Who is devoid of a *kārmic* body and Who has the *ākāśa* for body'; *M.* 'Who is comparable to *ākāśa* (in being all-pervading)'.

(29) 'When I . . . Lord': *R.* 'When I was about to be absorbed in the Lord's immaterial body known as Aniruddha'.

(31) *Ṣ.* Marīchi, etc. only awake from sleep, like Brahmā.

CH. VII. P. 23 (4) 'disastrous consequences': *S.* 'such as the notion of one being a doer'; *R.* 'the three kinds of affliction'.

(10) 'even the sages . . .': *M.* (v. r.): 'Even those who are beyond rule and prohibition'.

P. 24 (18) 'as Brahmā . . . Rudra': (v. r.): 'as the sun', (*S.* refers to a story in the *Vāmana Purāna*). *R.* takes 'Ka' to mean Dakṣha; *M.* (v. r.) takes 'Arki' to mean the god Saturn, and refers to a story in *Vāyu Purāna*.

P. 25 (27) 'whereas you do': Other commentators do not find this meaning implicit here.

P. 26 (45) 'being . . . son': *M.* reads 'valiant' before 'son'.

CH. VIII. P. 27. *M.* has three extra verses at the beginning to the effect that Sri Krishna showed Draupadi the widows of the enemy, with dishevelled hair, lamenting.

(3) 'King . . . brothers': *M.* 'Dhṛtarāshtra with his brother Sanjaya'.
P. 28 (9) 'who . . . fear': *R.* 'Who inspires no fear in others'.
V. C. 'Who assures sanctuary'.

P. 29 (20) *S.s alt*: 'Thou art not to be seen as Thou art, even by wise men, contemplatives, and men freed from loves and hates. How then could we women see and cultivate devotion to Thee?'

'incarnate . . . devotion in': *R.* 'the object of devotion of the pure-hearted, and omniscient Paramahamsas (like Sanaka), etc.'

(25) 'which . . . death': *Ṣ.* 'the like of whose (beauty and charm) we can hope to see nowhere else'.

P. 30 (27) 'modes . . . *guṇas*': *S.* explains, '(from Whom return baffled) the objects of the *purushārthas*'; *R.* 'such as loves and hates'; *M.* '(who is unaffected by) the states of waking etc.' *V.* 'who is accessible to those who are beyond the sway of the *guṇas*'. 'Who . . . peace': *S.* 'Who is free from likes and dislikes'; *R.* 'Who is free from the six disabilities'; *M.* 'Who is full of happiness'.

(28) 'though . . . strife': *R.* 'though Thou art the cause of dissensions (by dealing out to all creatures the (different) fruits of their *karmas*)'; *Ṣ.* 'Who deals impartially with all, in regard to those matters on which they quarrel'.

P. 31 (37) *R.* 'Art Thou, too, intent on Thy own purposes, going to leave us, Thy devotees?'

(38) '*jīva*': *N.* and *V.* 'the life-breath' (*Mukhyaprāṇa*).

P. 32 (46) 'who did not know': *R.* 'who knew'; *Ṣ.* 'who knew that Yudhishtira would not follow their instructions, (since such was the Lord's will) but tried to console him, as the Lord wished'.

CH. IX. P. 33 (13) *M.* (*v. r.*): (Kunti suffered) 'like a woman who had no children'.

(15) 'and Arjuna, the bowman': *R.* (*v. r.*) 'Arjuna and Draupadi'.

P. 34 (17) 'everything . . . Providence': *S.* explains, 'all happiness and misery'. *M.* 'the world'.

(21) *M.* renders '*sama-dṛśah*' as 'who sees all things as they really are'. For 'Whatever . . . Him', he would substitute, 'His attitude towards you is unaffected (by what you asked Him to do)'.

(26) 'two-fold aspect': *R.* 'as applying to knowledgeable or ignorant men, to men who had *śakti* and to those who had not'.

P. 35 (30) 'without closing his eyes': *R.* suggests 'without so much as winking an eye'; *M.* 'with beaming eyes'; (*alt.*) 'with half-open eyes'.

(32) 'I have . . . dwell on': *R.* 'May my mind with its insatiable longing be anchored securely in'. '*Sātvatas*': *R.* 'Yādavas' or 'devotees'. 'than . . . greater': *R.* 'Who is unique and limitless'. 'Who . . . Self': *M.* 'Whose essence is Bliss and Who is now here close by me'.

P. 36 (34) *M.* 'with the beads . . . scattered': *M.* 'adorned with the beads of perspiration made turbid by the pendant locks, grey . . . striking against each other'.

P. 37 (44) 'unconditioned': R. 'flawless'. M. 'unqualified by the evolutes of Prakṛti (the subtle body)'.

CH. X. P. 37 (1) 'regained . . . blessings': M. 'reduced his worldly enjoyments'.

P. 37-38 (2) 'Who . . . prosper': M. (v.r.) 'Who uproots *samsāra*'. After verse 3, M. has an extra verse saying that Krishna enabled Yudhishtira to offer three sacrifices.

P. 38 (13) 'they . . . eyes': M. (v.r.) 'they tried to follow him with their eyes, from higher and higher vantage points, and when they could see Him no longer, followed him in their thoughts'.

P. 39 (21) 'jīvas' . . . quiescent': S. explains that 'quiescence' refers not to the *jīvas*, who being the Brahma, know no 'laya', but to their powers. R. (purport) 'During Pralaya, Īśvara remits His purpose, that is, creation, and so on, and remains inactive. He is then One, that is, undifferentiated from *chit* and *achit* which remain in their subtle state. Sri Krishna is none other than He'. M. takes 'their powers' to refer to the goddesses Śrī, Bhū and Durgā, who control Sattva etc. and who during Pralaya cease from their activities and delight in the Lord; while He remains hidden from Prakṛti.

(22) R. (purport): He enters, as the Inner Ruler, into the creatures of Prakṛti, which obeys His prompting and obscures the true nature of the *jīva*, who is subordinate to Him; and He forwards her purpose of creation by differentiating names and forms for the *jīva*, who has really neither. M. 'He deposits His *vīrya* in His spouse Mahālakshmi who embarks on creation by His inspiration. He, Whose name is secret and Whose form is supersensible, does this in order to manifest the universe of name and form in Himself'.

(23) 'He alone . . . mind': M. (v.r.) 'The heart of the *jīva* is not purified by *karma*, as it is by Bhakti'.

P. 40 (25) 'in . . . world': R. 'in order to promote the prosperity of the good'. authority . . . truth': R. 'deeds, which are holy'.

(30) M. takes the first half to refer to their former lives as Agni's sons, who did *tapas* in order to be born as Krishna's wives. In latter half, he reads (v.r.) (*cheshtā-viśeshat*) 'with His glamorous ways'.

CH. XI. P. 42 (11) 'who . . . strength': M. 'who were all of equal strength'.

P. 44 (31) 'pensive reveries': S. explains (see foot-note on p. 44): 'Krishna's spouses could not bear even their own *antahkaraṇas* intervening between them and Him'. R.; 'They gave up their eager longing for Him, since He was now with them'.

P. 45 (38) 'He . . . ātman': S. explains: 'The Lord, though tenanting the body, is never affected by its joys and sorrows, even as the intellect, though it derives its light from the Brahma (Ātman), does not share its intrinsic qualities such as bliss etc.'; (*alt.*) it might mean 'the Lord . . . sorrows, unlike the intellect which, though Prakṛti, takes to itself characteristics of the Ātman like *sattā*, *prakāśā*'.

R. 'The Lord, though He pervades "*mūla-prakṛti*", is untouched by its *guṇas* or by those qualities that afflict the *jīva* such as ignorance, egotism etc., even as the Lord's *jñāna* is not affected by *sattva* etc.'

M. 'When even the *buddhi* of the 'jñānis', who are in Prakṛti, rests on Krishna and is not affected by Prakṛti's gunas, how can the Lord, though in Prakṛti, be affected by them or by *śabda* etc.?'
 (39) 'think of the *jīva*': *R.* 'think of *Īśvara*'.

CH. XII. P. 46 (16) 'since ... protected': *Tr.* follows *R* and *M.* All others take 'rāta' to mean 'given'.

P. 47 (30) 'meditating ... womb': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'his mind dwelling on the thought that the serpent was to bite him'.

P. 48 (32) 'offering the horse sacrifice': The sacrifices (mentioned here in the proper context) are the same as those mentioned earlier.

CH. XIII. P. 49 (15) 'Aryamā': *R.* 'the sun'. *M.* 'Yama'.

P. 50 (25) 'freeing ... attachments': *R.* 'freeing himself from the bondage of *puṇya* and *pāpa* that makes for *samsāra*'.

(30) 'uncles': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'Kunti and Dhṛtarāṣṭra'.

P. 51 (37) 'Nārada ... with Tumburu'. *S.* repudiates as unauthentic a verse before this, which says, 'Nārada came with Tumburu, thrumming his three-stringed *vīṇā*. The Pūru king questioned him, when he was duly seated after receiving all honours'.

P. 52 (43) 'whether ... or as both': *S.* 'eternal', regarded as '*jīva*'; 'ephemeral', regarded as body; 'neither ... other': i.e., inscrutable, regarded as the Pure Brahma or as *Māyā*; 'or both', because in it are both 'intelligence' and 'matter'. 'delusion ... ignorance': (lit.) 'infatuation caused by affection'.

(45) 'the man ... python': *M.* 'the frog ... python'.

(54) 'united ... without': *R.* 'uniting the senses with the *kshetrajña* (individual soul) who is of the nature of *vijnāna*, and meditating on the soul freed from the limiting adjuncts, as being of the same *ākāra* as the Brahma, the Support'. *M.* 'meditating on all the universe as merged in Virinchi, the 'jagad-vijnānātmā'; on him as merged in the Antaryāmin, Hari, in the heart; and on Him as identical with the all-pervasive, all-supporting Brahma. *Ṣ.* 'Separating the subtle body; the abode of the ego, from the gross body and merging it in the *kshetrajña* (the *jīva*, who has a possessive attitude towards the two bodies), merging the *kshetrajña* in the *suddha-jīva*, the *vijnānātmā*, and him in the Brahma'.

CH. XIV. P. 53 (2) 'months': *M.* thinks 'days' are meant here.

(4) 'guile': *R.* 'folly'; *M.* 'actuated by selfishness'.

P. 54 (8) 'that body': *S.* 'the human semblance, which He had adopted as a means to His play'. *R.* 'body not fashioned by Prakṛti'; *M.* 'the earth'; *Ṣ.* 'the cosmic body'.

(12) 'auspicious animals': *M.* 'the skylark and other such'.

(13) 'pigeon': *M.* 'A bird (seen by Yudhishtira in a dream) which eats pebbles and puts its foot in the fire'.

CH. XV. P. 57-8 (9) 'It was ... tribute'; *S.* & *V.* question the genuineness of this verse but comment on it. 'Pramathanatha': *M.* 'Rudra'. He reads 'gadāyudha' for 'gajāyuta'.

P. 58 (10) Reading this along with 9, *R.* takes it to mean that it was Bhīma, who thus executed vengeance; that Draupadi's tears may have fallen on his feet, or on Dussasana's, or on the Lord's.

(14) 'It ... relation': *M.* (*v.r.*) takes it to refer to Arjuna's relationship to the Kurus. He suggests that Arjuna not only carried off the headgear of Bhishma etc. but also humbled their pride.

P. 59 (23) 'as if ... other': *M.* 'as if they did not know'.

P. 60 (24) 'protecting ... other': *R.* 'bringing up, or making them increase'. *M.* 'produce or bring forth'.

P. 61 (36) 'with that ... His': *M.* 'with a body of His own choice'.

(46) 'Having ... life': *R.* (*v.r.*) 'Regarding all things as worthless'.

CH. XVI. P. 63 (8) 'the lord of death': *M.* 'the Lord Narasimha'. 'at ... slaughter': *R.* 'at the sacrifice whose main purpose is to celebrate the Lord'.

(13) *Ĵ.* suggests that the subduing of continents other than Jambūdvīpa was under-taken after Parikṣhit had put down Kali.

P. 66 (36) 'dames of the Madhus': *S.* 'The reference is to the proud Satyabhāmā and her like'. *R.* 'Who made the Yadu women feel that there was nothing else they wanted'. *Ĵ.* 'who ... feel proud in the consciousness of their purity'.

CH. XVII. P. 68 (24) 'Now (in Kali) only one leg'. *Deepāni* says, 'Though one-fourth part of each part should be present in Kali, actually only one-fourth part of Truth alone is present; only on this assumption can all the other statements in this Purāṇa be reconciled'. P. 69 (34) 'Who is embodied in the sacrifice': *R.* 'Who has for His body those (Indra etc.) who are worthy of worship'. *M.* (*v.r.*) 'Who takes a body of His own free will'.

CH. XVIII. P. 70 (8) 'wolf': *M.* 'one who destroys Dharma, Jñāna etc.'

P. 71 (12) 'to which ... hopes': *R.* 'in order to be rid of the fear (of saṃsāra)'; *M.* 'because of which we have not even a moment to spare for other things (but we have plenty of time to hear of Hari)'. 'whose ... smoke': *R.* 'whose minds are wholly taken up with karma'; *M.* 'whose bodies have been purified by smoke'.

P. 72 (19) 'Who ... attributes': *R.* (with a different construction): 'He who extols the names of Him Who is called (in the Vedānta) Ananta because of His numberless qualities'.

(21) 'sanctified Īśa': *R.* 'sanctified Indra and other Loka-pālas'

(22) 'enter ... Paramahamsa': *M.* 'attain the Brahma known as Mukunda, Which can be gained only through the Paramahamsa-āśrama'; *Ĵ.* explains that Paramahamsas are those who have attained rooted devotion by discarding loves and hates.

(26) 'himself immutable': *R.* 'free from the changes effected by duality'. *M.* 'motionless', or 'free from activity prejudicial to concentration'. 'transcended ... consciousness': *S.* explains 'attained the *turiya* state'; *R.* 'meditating on the Ātman'; *M.* 'meditating on Hari'. 'become ... Brahma': *R.* 'absorbed in meditation on the Brahma'; *M.* 'realizing the presence of the Lord without any effort'.

P. 73 (36) 'with ... Kauśiki': *M.* 'wearing a ring of *kuśa* grass'.

P. 74 (44) 'we ... cause them': *R.* 'we shall incur a sin that will be destructive of our prospects of progeny'.

(50) 'since . . . soul'; R. 'since the Self (*jīva*) does not harbour loves and hates.'

CH. XIX. P. 75 (3) M. omits 'cows'.

(6) 'both within and without': R. 'both here and hereafter'.

P. 76 (13) 'Ah! . . . conduct': J. 'We (the Pāṇḍavas) whose conduct, like that of Manu and such like, wins the grace of the supremely great like you, are blest among kings'. M. 'Pitiable is the Kshattriya race, which is open to reproach by its actions and is deprived of the water with which Brahmanas' feet are washed'.

(14) R. (purport): 'The curse is a favour conferred on me by the Lord, as it induces disgust with life, and will cure me of my sin and bring me liberation'. M. 'May this punishment prove the cause of supreme 'vairāgya' for me, whose heart clings to Hari, the Lord of the freed and the unfreed, Who confers 'mukti' on those who cling to Him and bondage on those who cling to house and home'.

P. 77 (21) 'and goes . . . sorrow': M. 'passes on to the perfect Lord Who is beyond the influence of the three *gunas*, Who is eternally unassailed by misery'; R. 'passes on to the world of pure *sattva*'.

(25) 'like one . . . discarded': M. 'was like one of the naked sages,' or 'without any ornaments'.

P. 78 (36) 'from whose . . . redemption?': R. renders, 'vaniya-sah' as 'dwelling in the forest'; M. (v. r.) 'the most worthy of honour among the great'.

BOOK II (pp. 80-124)

CH. I. P. 80 (4) 'possessions . . . unreality': M. (v. r.): 'the inauspicious things that degrade self-respect'.

(6) 'from discriminating . . . duties': R. 'by the practice of Jñāna-yoga, of Bhakti-yoga without hankering for the fruits, and by regarding oneself as wholly dependent on the Lord'.

(8) 'the end . . . age': R. 'the beginning of Kali'; M. 'in Dvāpara before the advent of Krishna'.

(9) 'established . . . Brahma': R. 'in contemplation of the glory of the Lord, without bothering about the Śāstra'.

P. 81 (11) 'winning . . . reward': R. 'winning freedom by disinterested Karma-yoga'.

(19) 'on each . . . body': R. 'on the face'.

P. 82 (21) 'the form . . . auspicious': M. 'the form of the Lord, which is the auspicious support'.

(25) 'Lord . . . cosmic *jīva*': R. 'This is an *aṁśa* of Aniruddha (the Virāt-purusha), not the four-faced Brahmā'; V. holds that the Lord, making His abode in the cosmos, is the object of meditation.

(26) 'Those who know . . .': M. maintains that this should not be taken literally; it only means that the Lord is the origin and support of the different worlds and the gods presiding over the organs.

P. 83 (36) 'the birds': R. 'the *tittiri* and other birds whose forms the Vedas took'. 'Manu': R. '*mantra*'; M. 'Svaya' or 'Svayambhū'; V. 'intelligence'. 'Asura . . . might': R. (v. r.) 'Prahlaḍa'.

(37) 'the dark-complexioned . . . feet': R. 'The black colour should be contemplated as that of His feet'.

CH. II. P. 84 (1) 'in the far past': *M.* 'the first creation'. *R.* maintains that it is a new *Brahmā* that creates the world after every Deluge, and 'memory' means merely 'endeavour to obtain knowledge'.

(2 & 3) *R.* (in summary) suggests that the Vedas teach the way to liberation as well as to lesser goals; the man of discrimination should not lose sight of the main goal, while performing *karmas* essential for maintaining life, which are the result of his past *karma*. *M.* (in substance) says that while Hari is the true goal, the Veda points out that the *jīva* entangled in *karma* takes literally the praises of lesser gods and is fascinated by the pleasures promised, but he will not gain *moksha* by following these enticing paths.

P. 85 (6) 'Who ... will': *R.* (*v.r.*) 'when the mind is steady with knowledge and faith'; *M.* 'when one's mind has attained serenity by the grace of Hari'.

(10) 'neck': *R.* 'the bosom adjacent to the neck'.

P. 86 (14) 'the Witness': *R.* 'the Omniscient'.

(16) 'should cease ... activity': *R.* says this should be done only at the time of death.

(18) 'discarding ... Ātman': *M.* 'intent on escaping from the miseries of *samsāra*, which is not the *Brahma*'.

P. 87 (22) 'to any ... *gunas*': *R.* would say, 'when he dies'. *M.* takes it to refer to the worlds, Mahah, etc.

(25) 'that Abode ... others': *R.* takes this as qualifying 'the circle ... porpoise' in previous verse. He says that the yogi passing beyond goes to the Janaloka, where the gods live for a Kalpa.

P. 88 (34) 'chose that way'; that is, 'decided which way'. *R.* (purport) 'Men supremely skilled in the scriptures, investigating the Veda, have concluded that the *Brahma*, Which is none other than *Bhagavān Vāsudeva*, is the cause of the world and that devotion to Him is the sole means to *Moksha*'. *M.* (*v.r.*) (purport) '*Brahmā*, examining the Veda, found that it was the *Bhāgavatam* that could produce in one supreme loving devotion to Hari, the immutable *Brahma*'.

Pp. 88-89 (35) *R.* (in substance) 'Hari is cognized by the mind purified by yoga as present in all creatures and as omniscient. The Lord is also inferred from the existence of Mahat etc. in their gross form (intellect, and so on), as their Cause. He is also known through Vedantic texts and *Smrtis*'. *M.* would say, 'through *Bhāgavatam*'.

CH. III. P. 89 (3) 'Māyā': *R.* 'the power of the Lord'; *M.* 'Lakshmi'. 'Prowess': *Tr.* follows *V.* Some render *vīrya* as 'virility'.

(4) 'he ... people': *R.* (*v.r.*) 'he ... controller of the directions, *M.* 'he ... of the merchant class'.

P. 90 (7) 'Yajna': *M.* 'Indra'.

(9) *M.* 'He who is free from perdition desires should worship the Lord with the six glorious attributes'.

(12) Latter half (*v.r.*): *M.* 'the practice of devotion which, through *aparoksha-jñāna*, leads to *moksha*'.

P. 91 (19): 'rated as no better': *J* and *V*: 'Such men are praised by those animals as excelling them by combining their worst traits'.

P. 92 (24) 'which... melt': *V.* 'which is not transformed into *bhagavadēyatva*' (willing submission of the Lord).

CH. IV. P. 93 (12) 'three powers': *R.* 'those represented by *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*'; *M.* 'Icchā-Jñāna-Kriyā-śakti'.

P. 95 (19) *R.* (taking 'ātmavatām adhiśvārah' together); 'The *Paramātmān* Who gives the fruits of yoga to the yogis'; *M.* 'those who have directly seen the *Brahma* or attained *mokṣha*' 'Whose... admiration': *R.* and *M.* 'Whose work can be known even by *Aja*, etc. only indirectly by inference'.

(23) 'as Activator... functions': *S. (lit.)* says 'activates' or (*alt.*) 'governs'. *R.* 'enjoys in a spirit of play'.

CH. V. P. 95 (10) 'cannot... untrue': *M. (v.r.)*: 'Is it not untrue? It is'.

P. 96 (14) 'object': i.e. 'created thing' or 'effect'. *R.* points out that some wrong-headed people described substance as the cause of the universe, and this is refuted by this verse.

(19) 'implicit... gods': *R.* 'whose nature it is to produce delusion, illumination and action'. His rendering of latter half: 'the *guṇas*... bind the *jīva*... to work for good or evil by means of the body and the organs'.

(20) (as explained by *S.*, *V.* and *J.*) 'The *guṇas*, by subjecting the *jīva* to their sway, are his distinguishing marks. They obliquely indicate the Lord as the Controller of the *jīva*. The verse may also mean that His devotees see Him clearly as the Activator and Controller of the *jīva*'. 'Who... apprehended': *R. (v.r.)* 'Who moves of His own free will'.

(22) 'change... disposition': *R.* '*Prakṛti*'s natural disposition to change'. He renders, 'By means of time, that disturbs the *guṇas*'. *M.* explains Mahat as the 'body of the Four-faced *Brahmā*' and '*Karma*' as '*Hiranyagarbha*'s *adṛiṣṭa*'.

P. 97 (24 & 25) *R.* maintains that the eleven organs are the product of the *Sāttvika-ahamkāra*, and the *Rājasa-ahamkāra* is only ancillary in this work. *M.* holds that *Rājasa* produces the organs of action, *Sāttvika*, those of sensation, as well as the mind and the gods presiding over the directions. He (*v.r.*) suggests that *Rudra* is indicated as the ruler of *Tāmasa-ahamkāra*.

(32) '*guṇas*': *R.* 'the subtle elements'; *V.* 'subtle elements' or 'gods'. *R.*, *V.* and *M.* take 'body' to refer to the cosmic egg.

(33) 'varying... both': *R.* takes '*sad-asat*' to mean the 'gross and the subtle, and (reading '*nobhāyam*') 'what is neither the one nor the other i.e., the aforesaid *kāla-karma-svabhāva*'; with these the cosmic egg was created. *M. (v.r.)* suggests that the cosmic egg is described as 'the source of our fears'. He takes *sat* to refer to the three manifest elements, earth, water and fire, and '*asat*' to the other two.

CH. VI. P. 99 (1) '... and of man': (*lit.*) '*amṛta*' ('the sanctified remnants of the offerings to the gods and the manes').

(2) 'fragrant... special': *R.* 'pleasure from seeing what is agreeable and recognising it as belonging to oneself'; *M.* 'smells, good and bad'; *V.* 'what smells pleasant even from afar'.

(3) 'sacred waters': *M.* and *Ṣ.* 'the Śāstras'.

(4) 'or perhaps . . . those': *Ṣ.* 'and those substances such as ghee, etc. which are used in sacrifices'.

P. 100 (11) 'of intelligence . . . *guṇas*': *R.* (*v.r.*) 'of the Mahat tattva'; *M.* 'the Vijnāna-tattva and its presiding deity Sarasvatī'; 'Chitta': *R.* 'antah-karaṇa'; *M.* 'the middle body' (trunk).

(15) *R.* (latter half): 'By the Lord who dwells in the heart (which is ten inches above the navel) this world is encompassed'.

(16) 'the sun': *R.* 'the Paramātmā'; 'as the Lord pervades and rules the body and all else outside, so He does the cosmos in and out'.

(17) *S.* 'The uniqueness of the Lord lies in the fact that though He has the universe for His body He is the enjoyer and dispenser of that *moksha*, which is bliss and excludes the fear of *samsara*'; *M.* 'He is the Lord and Protector of all liberated souls.'

'Being . . . death': *R.* 'Since He is far above the transient enjoyment of the results of *karma*'; *M.* 'Since He is eternally superior to, and the Lord of Lakshmi, and the world of matter, presided over by her, and its perishable products.'

P. 101 (18 & 19) *S.* 'immortality': (*lit.*) 'imperishable happiness'; 'secure felicity'; *i.e.* unmarred by the sight of others' suffering.

R. renders 'amṛta' as 'freedom from changes like death'; 'abhaya' as 'the consequent freedom from fear' and 'kshema' as 'attainment of unparalleled bliss'; *M.* says all *jīvas* are Hari's 'bhinna-amsas'. They are spoken of as *pāda*. 'Amṛta' is 'the seat of Ananta'; 'Abhaya' is Vaikuntha; and 'Kshema' is Śveta-dvīpa.

(20) 'The Supreme Lord': *R.* 'The *jīva*'.

P. 102 (36) 'Vāmadeva': *R.* 'a rishi'. 'this universe . . . reaches'; *R.* (*v.r.*) 'we regard this lifeless body as our own self'!

CH. VII. *P.* 104 (2) 'gods . . . *Suyāmās*': *R.* (*v.r.*): 'gods possessing self-discipline'. *M.* 'Tushitas'.

(3) 'the . . . Kapila': *R.* 'the goal taught by Kapila'; *M.* suggests that Kapila returned to his own world.

(4) 'Which . . . *moksha*': *M.* (*v.r.*): 'which brought them to the goal, which is Vishnu'.

(6) 'seeing women . . .': *M.* (*v.r.*): would read after 'He', 'the Lord who had uninterrupted self-realization'.

P. 105 (10) 'which . . . *Paramahamsas*': *R.* takes this as qualifying 'the Lord' and renders it as 'the Parabrahma to be reached by the *Paramahamsas*, as the Vedas say'.

(13) 'welcoming . . . sleep': *M.* 'whose eyes were half-closed'.

P. 106 (16) *M.* gives the Lord's name in this incarnation as 'Tāpasa'; others as 'Hari'.

(18) *M.* (*v.r.*) 'willingly offered his own head to Hari'.

(19) *S.*, and *R.*, who refers to Book XI, Ch. XIII; both speak of this as the Hamsa incarnation; *M.* as 'Mahidāsa'.

P. 107 (20) 'even . . . (Satyaloka)': *M.* (*v.r.*): 'firm in maintaining Dharma or the truth'.

P. 109 (40) 'all . . . *Satyaloka*': *R.* and *M.* omit all reference to Pradhāna. *V.* suggests that it is *Satyaloka* that is meant by the words meaning 'the state in which the *guṇas* are in equilibrium'.

P. 111 (49) *S.* (*alt.*) would substitute, for 'as . . . rest', the following: 'as it is He who inspires all worldly actions (by Brahmanas, etc.) in accordance with their disposition'. In the second half of the verse *R.* would substitute 'Paramātman' for 'jīva'.

(53 & 54) There are two verses between 52 and 53 found in some manuscripts and commented upon only by *R.* and *M.* and their substance is, 'If the Lord is not propitiated by the Dharmas which a man practises, what is the use of other trivial gains?'

CH. VIII. P. 112 (8) *M.* takes 'ayam purushah' (translated as 'the ordinary mortal') to refer to the cosmic egg.

(10) 'who dwells . . . all creatures': *R.* (*v.r.*): 'Perfect in the possession of the six attributes'; or 'the one Support of Brahmā and all others'; *M.* 'Always the abode of wisdom, bliss, etc.'

(12) 'Kalpa': *M.* 'Kalpa is a day of Brahmā; Vikalpa is the Manvādi - or Vārāhādi - Kalpa'.

P. 113 (19) 'description . . . functions': *R.* 'definition of the cause and nature of the *tattvas*'; *M.* 'definition of Brahma, the Cause'.

P. 114 (26) 'I shall not . . . work': *R.* 'From fasting or even from the angry Brahmana death cannot come upon me'.

CH. IX. P. 114 (4) 'His true form': *R.* 'spoke true words'.

P. 115 (5) 'wisdom': *S.* 'the tenets of Bhakti'; *R.* 'Dharma'.

(11) 'They . . . splendour': *Ṣ.* says these are Vishnu's attendants other than those who had won similarity of form with Him. *V. C.* suggests that those who had worshipped the Lord as 'of a cerulean blue', attained Sārūpyam with that colour; *V.* renders 'śyāma' as 'the darkness at the core of the sun's orb at midday'. He explains 'varchas' as 'chetana-kānti'.

P. 116 (16) 'path . . . Paramahamsas': *S.* and *M.* 'Jnāna-mārga'; *R.* and others: 'Bhakti-mārga'.

P. 116-7 (20) *M.* (*v.r.*): renders second half thus: 'The utmost limit or goal to be reached by all pious duties is seeing Me'.

P. 117 (22) *S.* renders 'hṛdaya' as '*antaranga-śakti*' and 'Ātmā' as 'Swarupa'. *M.* says it means 'tapas is dear to me'.

(25) 'The gross . . . Thee': *R.* 'Thy two forms, the glorious and divine intelligent form, and the *jīva* which is associated with the intelligent soul and unintelligent matter; for Thou hast no Prākṛtic form produced by *karma*'; *M.* 'the form "*Vairāja*"; known as "*anda*"'.

(30) *S.* 'the secret . . . heart' is Bhakti.

P. 118 (32) 'the cause thereof': *S.* 'Pradhāna'. *R.* renders 'sat-asat-para' (taken as one word), as 'distinct from *jīva* and *jada*'; *M.* 'the gross and the subtle, time, Prakṛti and other things'.

M. renders purport thus: 'The one independent existence before creation and after destruction, as well as in the middle, is Myself'.

P. 118 (33). *R.* (purport): 'When Prakṛti is realized, we see that alone but not the principle of intelligence, and *vice versa*. When the Ātman is realized, Prakṛti is not perceived; this is the Māyā of the Paramātman'; *M.* 'Whatever is a percept, though of no value to the Lord, whatever existence is in no way contrary to the Lord e.g., *jīvas* and Prakṛti, should be known as the Māyā of Paramātman i.e., wholly dependent on His grace'.

(34). The point of the comparison of the Lord with the gross elements (acc. to *R.*) is that 'they are not affected by divisions and other limitations to which the products are subjected'.

CH. X. P. 119 (3) *M.* takes 'Sarga' to mean creation from Mahat down to the cosmic egg, and 'Paurusha' to refer to Hari appearing as Purusha within the egg.

P. 120 (8) *R.*: 'The Ādhyātmika-purusha, who dwells as Inner Ruler in the *jīva*, is also the Inner Ruler of the gods who preside over the senses. He is different from both the *jīva* and the senses; and He is also the Inner Ruler of the elements'.

(9) 'Since...others': *R.* takes this as meaning that 'we cannot perceive a whole class of objects if one faculty is wanting, whereas the Lord knows directly the knower, the sense faculty and the object of knowledge'. 'the base...self-sustained': *R. (v. r.)*: 'the Support of the *jīva*, who is the resort of *avidyā*'; or, 'He is His own support, as well as of others'. *M.* He (Vishnu) is the support of liberated souls (such as Lakshmi) who are 'His own.'

(15) 'Vital...strength': *R.* 'power to act, speed of momentum, and strength to support.' 'and (from...) life breath', 'from the Prāṇa of Chaturmukha, the prāṇas of all the chief sources of vitality are produced'. *M.* From Hari (Inner Ruler of Brahmā) the powers of subduing, enduring and free action were evolved, and from these *Mukhya-Prana*'.

(17) *J.* says that the statement about thirsting and hungering should be referred to the 'Vyashti-jiva'.

(23) *S.* explains that the sense of touch, located on the surface of the skin covered with hair, has the trees for the deities presiding over it. It is called 'loma' (hair) when it feels softness or hardness, heat or cold or the impulse to scratch. When the hand gauges the lightness or heaviness of an object, the sense is called *tvak* and then it is the air that covers it above and below that is the deity. *M.* construes 'tvachā-vṛta vātaḥ' as 'Vayu endowed with the quality of touch.'

(34) 'the...casual body': *R.* takes 'sukshma' to refer to the *jīva* and translates, 'Beyond this gross and huge form there is that subtle form (or body) which is the *mukta-jīva*, not manifest to the gross senses' etc.

BOOK III

CH. I. P. 124 (1 & 2) 'exalted...Lord': *R.* 'Vidura, the Lord Yama...who had left the home of Dhṛtarashtra, which he had regarded as his own'.

P. 127 (17) 'thousand forms': *R.* 'images' (like that of Sri Ranganatha).

'granted...merits': *M.* takes this to refer to Hastināpura.

(18) 'holy...lakes': *V.* 'the pools in rivers (such as Kalia's)'

(29) 'who...distance': *R.* 'the Lord, Who had renounced the throne'; *M.* adds that the Lord felt no regrets.

P. 128-9 (34) 'source...organ': *R. & M.* 'who is to be known only through the Sāstra and whose fourth *amsa* is pure *sattva*'.

(42) 'Seeing...greatness of Hari': R. 'Seeing the world, which shows Hari's greatness'; M. 'I follow the Nivṛtti-mārga that leads to Krishna, seeing the miseries of Samsāris'.

CH. II. P. 131 (8) 'the moon': R. 'a boat'.

(9) 'though...Inner Ruler': The translation follows *Bālāpr.* R. 'the Supreme Lord, the abode of all creation, as but the Kshetrājña.'

(11) 'leaving...blinded': (*lit*) 'taking away the eye of the world'; S. explains, 'because there was nothing else that was worth looking at'; R. (*v. r.*) 'taking away with Him the cynosure of the eyes of those who had practised austerities and could not have enough of it'.

(13) Both S. & R. agree that Krishna's body was not Brahmā's creation but is so described in concession to human understanding.

(15) 'uniting...fraction': R. 'along with (Balarāma) a great *amsa* of His'; M. 'required in this behalf by Brahmā'.

(30) 'worship of the cows': R. 'sacrifice called Gosava'; V. 'sacrifice offered by Vaiśyas for the prospering and multiplying of cows'.

(33) 'distressed Vraja': M. (*v. r.*) applies the adjective to Indra.

CH. III. P. 134 (3) 'like Suparṇa': R. 'who rode in a brilliant chariot'; M. 'who was of the nature of Bliss'; N. 'whose coming was welcome to Rukmiṇi'.

P. 135 (9) 'from...multiply Himself': 'for the sake of Prakṛti' (*acc. to S.*); R. 'from the desire of the earth'; M. 'from Prakṛti's desire to breed and multiply'.

(13) 'felt no joy': M. (*v. r.*) 'rejoiced (and congratulated Bhima)'.

(14) 'My own fractions': R. & M. take this to refer to Bhīṣma, Drona etc. though for different reasons.

(19) 'following...world': R. 'following the teaching of Śruti and Smṛti'. His rendering of latter half: 'Living in Dvarakā, He enjoyed the Bliss of the Self, the object of the aspirant for liberation.' M. 'Sāṅkhya' stands for knowledge of the Self (*svarūpa*).

CH. IV. P. 137 (7) 'Dark . . . purity': R. 'Of a black and white complexion'; M. 'who shone even at night like the bright sun.'

(8) 'leant . . . Him': M. (*v. r.*) 'Who had assumed the state of a child, as at the time of His birth' (apparently with reference to His showing four arms); V. C. 'Who had turned His back on and finished His sport with this petty universe'. 'renounced . . . bliss': R. and V. 'renounced the fruits of *karma* and was immune from its effects such as leanness etc'; N. 'renounced His abode'.

P. 138 (20) 'whose . . . Guru': R. (taking 'pāda-tīrtha' as one word) '(I) who had worshipped His holy feet'; M. 'who had . . . the water that had washed His feet'.

P. 139 (31) 'is no . . . inferior': R. 'fit for equal enjoyment with Me in liberation'.

CH. V. P. 140 (1) 'attracted . . . affability': M. (*v. r.*) applies these qualities to Vidura.

(4) 'immemorial . . . Self': R. 'knowledge derived from the Veda, which lights up the truth'. M. (*v. r.*) 'the traditional wisdom regarding the all-pervading nature of the Lord.'

P. 141 (6) 'Yoga-Māyā': R. 'Parama-Ākāśa (Vaikuntha)'. He treats 'Yogeswara' as vocative, applied to Maitreya.

(8) 'regions . . . Light': M. 'the spheres covering the earth.'

(9) 'specific . . . therefrom': R. 'their organs of sense and action.'

P. 141-2 (12) M. (v. r.) holds that the main purpose of *Mbh.* was the glorification of Hari, not to entice the reader by vulgar matters.

P. 143 (23) See *Bk. II. Ch. IX. 32.* The universe existed in the causal state and so was not visible.

'because . . . solitary' S. (*alt*). 'because Māyā was quiescent'. R. 'when His will to create arose' or 'when He thought to destroy the universe'. M. reads 'sakti' for 'mati' and renders that part as 'Who is always seen as possessing and controlling all means and materials.'

(24) 'He . . . manifest': R. 'He has one uniform and uninterrupted light of intelligence (unlike the *jīva*); M. 'the one Supreme Ruler.' R. (v. r.) 'Who always sees things that have an existence'.

(26) R. (purport): 'the Lord, Himself unchanged, had the power of creation imparted to Māyā through the *jīva*, His own body; i. e. He inclined Māyā towards creation by Himself entering the *jīva*).

(28) 'Mahat . . . intelligence': R. '(The Lord) the Inner Ruler of the *jīva* and of *Prakṛti*, became the Mahat in order to make manifest the world of effects contained in *Prakṛti*, in a subtle state', (when time prompted the *Avyakta* in this behalf). M. 'Vijnānātmā is the four-faced *Brahmā*, who has an egoistic attitude towards the Mahat, looking on it as his body.'

R. (purport): 'Prompted by time, the Mahat, composed of the *gunas* and containing the *jīva* in itself, subjected itself to change, under the glance of the Lord, from the desire to produce the ego etc.' M. 'Virinchi receiving the glance of Hari and desiring to create the world caused the Mahat to incline to change'.

(31) R. maintains that *Taijasa* is not an independent entity but only an auxiliary to the other two in producing the organs on the one hand and the elements on the other.

P. 144 (39) 'may . . . confer': R. 'We resort to the shelter of Thy feet, which is *mukti*, and the *upasanā* which brings it'; M. (v. r.) 'We resort to the *Vidyā* which is a fraction of *Brahma-vidyā* which is the shade of Thy feet.'

P. 145 (44) 'Who . . . footsteps': R. 'Who possess the *śama*, *dama* etc. which enable the devotee to resign everything to the Lord's feet'.

M. 'Those who are endowed with *śama*, *dama*, etc. which come from entire self-surrender to Thy feet, do not see those whose minds are distracted by the external world'. (There are quite a number of v. r. in this verse).

(46) M. takes 'kavi' as referring not to Mahat but to the Lord Himself. CH. VI. P. 146 (4) 'body . . . Puruṣa': R. *Brahmā*; M. 'the cosmic egg, the body of *Brahmā*'.

(6) 'on the waters': R. 'This refers to the *garbhodaka* which existed before the egg was created and on which it lay'. He applies 'which shone like gold' to the cosmic egg, and reads 'sapurushah' as one word meaning, 'along with the *Samashtipurusha*, *Brahmā*'. M. 'The Lord Hari called *Puruṣa*, Who rests on the waters inside the cosmic egg, on the couch of *Sesha*'.

(8) The Virāt Puruṣa is called 'Ātmā' of all creatures, because they, the 'vyashtis', abide in him as trees do in the wood in which they stand. He is spoken of as an incarnation because Narayana manifests Himself in him (S.) 'Because Brahmā is the body of the Paramātmā, he is spoken of as the support of all individual beings. He is an inseparable part of the Lord and His first incarnation, being an 'āveśa-avatāra' and he is capable of creating all creatures in their infinite variety', (R.) 'Nowhere has the cosmic egg been described as an 'avatāra.' Vs. 8. refers to Hari Himself, Who assumed the forms of and worked His will through the various agents mentioned' (M.)

P. 147 (9 & 10) R. (purport): 'Brahmā, the Samashti-puruṣa, had with him the *jīvas*, their organs and the objects thereof, all in the 'samashti' state. The Lord inspired him with the knowledge of how to differentiate the 'vyashtis'. 'Prāna' in vs. 9. refers to the organs.' (11) R. This verse describes the differentiation from Brahmā of the bodies, organs etc. of individuals.

P. 148 (25) M. (v. r.) renders, 'The 'nādi' called Ātma-nādi was formed and Brhaspati entered it along with Buddhi', by means of which Brahmā (controlled by Hari) arrives at decisions'. In the next two verses he takes 'ātman' and 'sattva' to refer to two *nādis* so named. (26) S. 'Sattva stands for 'buddhi' and chitta, used as synonymous here' R. 'The inner organ called Buddhi, which discriminates between body and soul, was differentiated, and Prajapati (Brahmā) entered it along with the mind and the capacity for thought, by means of which the *jīva* attains correct knowledge of what should be done."

P. 149 (35) 'The Viraj form': The universe; the *karma* (translated as action) refers to the *adrishta* of the *jīvas*.

J. 'Yoga-Maya is the power of creation etc. of the universe'.

CH. VII. P. 150 (5) 'nescience': S. 'Maya here means Avidyā'; R. & M. 'Atma' here means the Paramātmā.

P. 151 (13) 'the Inner Ruler': 'Who is the Witness' (in that state) is S's rendering of *dārshtr-ātman*; R. & M. (v. r.) render it as 'when the Lord is realized'.

(15) 'comprehends . . . dependence': S. (alt.) 'comprehends both the *jīva's* dependence and his *moksha*'. R. 'His mind inclines to both courses i.e. listening to and hearing of the Lord's praises and the worshipping of His feet', mentioned in vs. 14. M. 'my mind is tossed between egoistic attachment to the body and to the Lord.'

P. 152 (24) 'who derive . . . kinds': M. takes 'yatra' as referring, not to *vibhūti's*, as S. does, but to the 'varnas' in Vs. 23, meaning that in the universe diversity and proliferation of creation stems from them. (25) 'who . . . created?' The verse would literally mean 'who were the Prajāpatīs, whom their Overlord Brahmā first created?' 'their distinguishing features'; (alt) 'their sub-divisions.'

CH. VIII. P. 154 (3) 'who . . . superior': R. 'the Supreme Lord Who transcends the worlds of *jīva* & *jada*' 'His own support': R. 'the Author of his being'. M. 'his independent support'.

P. 155 (13) 'Subtle elements': M. 'the garbha-udaka',

(15) *S.* points out that the *Brahmā* who thus emerged was the same as he who had along with *Vishnu* fallen into slumber at the end of the previous *Kalpa*.

P. 156 (20) 'time': 'Tri-nemi' means (*lit.*) the 'three-naved'; *R.* 'The three parts of the year in which the days are longer, shorter or of the same length as nights'; *M.* 'three parts of four months each'. (24-25). In the translation, the index number (2) has been wrongly printed. It should have been placed over 'enhanced' at the end of the next sentence. The mountain-simile is an 'abhūta-upamā.'

(28) 'that He . . . loves': This is after *V.* Others take it to mean that the necklace is very dear to the Lord's breast.

(29) 'Brahma': *S.* suggests ('*alt.*') 'Pradhāna'.

CH. IX. P. 158 (3) *S.*: see foot-note on p. 158; 'ekam'; *M.* 'not created by another'. *R.* considers that 'the elements and the senses' referred to are *aprākṛta*.

P. 159 (9) *S.* (*v. r.*) 'so long as one sees the body etc., as a reality apart from Thee'.

(13) *M.* suggests that dedication to the Lord of the fruits of sacrifices etc. alone can secure His grace, not merely doing them without desire for fruits.

(14) 'abidest . . . understanding': *S.* (*v. r.*) 'whose intellect is pure *chit*' (unlike the intellect of man, which is the product of *Prakṛti*).

P. 160 (16) 'Who . . . billows': *M.* '(Hari) Who is established in three seats, i.e. Ananta, Vaikuntha and the milky ocean'.

(20) 'nescience . . . modes': According to *Dīp.* the five modes are ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes and obsession. Others suggest other *alts.*

(21) 'I have . . . enjoyment': (*Dīp.*) ' . . . the three worlds as dependable means for the procurement of enjoyments or experience'. *S.* (*alt.*) 'I, who help the three worlds by my acts of creation' etc.

P. 161 (24) 'may . . . defective': *R.* explains this as amounting to a request that his memory of the *Veda* should not be lost. *M.* takes it to mean a request that he should never forget that the *Vedas* point to *Vishnu* as the central truth.

CH. X. P. 163-4 (8) *R.* (purport) 'He effected a division of the lotus into many parts, a three-fold division comprising the experiences, the objects and the means (organs) of experience'; *M.* 'He divided the lotus into three parts (worlds) and again into fourteen'.

(17) 'nescience': *S.* 'This, described as of five kinds, deludes the *jīva*, by its *āvaraṇa* and *vikshepa śaktis*'. *R.* takes 'tamas' to mean the cosmic egg. He maintains that it only means that this creation was not done by *Brahmā* prompted by the Lord as the Inner Ruler.

CH. XI. P. 167 (8) *S.* 'The *yāmas* vary in length according as the days and nights are longer or shorter. The twilight *muhūrtas* are not included in this reckoning'. *M.* Six 'nādikas' make a 'prahara, seven a *yāma*'.

P. 168 (15) 'multiplying . . . power': The sun does this by means of time, quickening and bringing out the potency implicit in the seed, to sprout and grow and so on.' 'Bhūta-bhedah' is explained by *S.*

as pointing to the sun, which is a product of the gross elements apprehended by the senses. *R.* and others take it to refer to the *Paramātmā*, Who effects the modifications of the elements.

(20) But in the 'Sandhya' and 'Sandhyāmsās', the common *Dharmas* are to be practised by all.

CH. XII. P. 170 (2) 'in . . . beginning': i. e. of the 'vyashti, creation (*R.*). *S.* (see foot-note also) renders the terms as follows: 'tamas' (obscuration of the true Self); 'moha' (mistaking body etc. for the Self); 'mahā-moha' (love of enjoyment); 'tāmisra' (anger at that being frustrated); 'andha-tāmisra' (the delusion that when enjoyment is frustrated he has himself been destroyed). He bases this on his interpretation of *V. P.* He thinks that the *Yoga Sūtras* in 'defining the *Panchakleśas*' mean the same thing. He says the verse might also lend itself to the definition by *Vishnuswāmī*, 'ajñāna-bheda-viparyāśa-bhaya-śōkhah'. *R.* takes the five varieties of *avidyās* to refer to the trees etc of the immobile creation. *V.* regards this creation as the creation of the deities presiding over the five different aspects of *avidyā*.

(3) *Sanaka* etc. are not created in every *Kalpa*. They are mentioned here, because the creation by *Brahmā* is being described (*S.*).

P. 171 (7) 'his wrath': *S.* followed by most commentators would render this as 'He, wrath (personified)'.

(27) *M.* says that the *Kardama* born of the shadow of *Brahmā*'s body, was a different person.

(32) While *S.* does not comment, all others take the appeal here as made to the Lord *Vishnu* (as does the tr.), while *M.* alone treats it as a deferential appeal to the better sense of *Brahmā* himself.

CH. XIII. P. 177 (16-17) Between these two verses is a verse and a half on which *R.* and *M.* comment: 'I drank up all the water, and placed the earth there, and placed on it all creatures, gods, *Asuras*, men, the manes, birds and beasts, reptiles, trees and *nāgas* and all creatures high and low.'

(31) 'anger . . . discus': *S.* (*alt.*) 'His anger, increased by the instigation of His own discus.'

(32) 'mire': *S.* suggests it means mineral mud, coloured red.

P. 179 (38) 'Thy postures': *S.* (*alt.*) 'seat'.

CH. XIV. P. 181 (2) 'first *Asura*': *R.* 'first of those who belonged to the *Vārāha-Kalpa*.'

CH. XV. P. 186 (5) 'art . . . universe': (*v. r.*) 'who cannot be known by any *Pramāṇa*' (*S.*)

(15) 'Who . . . Śāstra': *M.* 'Who is seen by the numberless *Vedas*, who are present there in concrete form'.

P. 187 (21) 'with her busy arm': This is *S.*'s *alt.* He suggests that it means *Lakshmi* who is free from the fault (of fickleness); *M.* 'free from birth and all other such defects'; *J. & N.* 'who is eternally free from defects.'

(23) 'doings . . . sins': *R.* takes 'rachanānuvādāt' to mean 'discourses on how to gain such ends of life as wealth etc.'

P. 188 (28) 'nostrils . . . red': *M.* (*v. r.*) 'the red eyes staring'.

(29) 'looking . . . eye': *M.* 'Seeing Hari (as Inner Ruler) everywhere and therefore untroubled by attachment, and unhindered'.
 P. 189 (30) 'stopped . . . canes': 'and also by word of mouth' (all commentators thus interpreting 'cha')

(33) 'fear . . . bodies': *M.* 'fear based on the notion of difference in the Brahma'.

P. 190 (39) 'His own abode': *M.* (His chest), the abode of Ātman i. e. Brahṁā (in the form of the Kausthubha gem)'.
 P. 191 (44) 'inner . . . lotus': *S.* calls this an *abhūta-upamā*. *Dīp.* explains this by pointing out that 'if the inner sheath, which is yellow in colour, were actually dark, it would look like the Lord's face'.
M. takes 'asita-padma' to mean 'fresh-blown lotus'.

CH. XVI. P. 193 (7) While *Ĵ.* adopts *S.*'s interpretation (followed in the translation) all other commentators adopt *S.*'s *alt.* (see footnote).

(9) 'command . . . Yoga-Māyā': *M.* 'manifest Myself in various forms through my Yoga-Māyā'.

(12) 'Do Me . . . favour': The translation follows *Ĵ.*, *N.* and *Bālap.*, *S.* and others render it as 'This is the favour I show them'.

(15) 'realizing . . . Māyā': *R.* (first half): (They answered Him): 'From Whom Brahṁā (and others) derived their authority over the world created by Prakṛti, the Lord's wonderful power'.

P. 194 (20) 'who . . . compete with': (lit.) 'to hanker after the place on the garland . . . occupied by the leader of the swarm of bees'.
 'leader . . . bees': *M.* 'the Lord of those supreme devotees who know and seek the highest'.

P. 194 (22) 'O Lord . . . intrinsic': *S.* (*alt.*) 'O Lord That art incarnate only in the (first) three Yugas'. 'three . . . Thine': These are austerity, purity and compassion (*S.*); *M.*: 'by Thy three forms, in Anantāsana, Vaikuntha and the 'sea of milk'.
 'destroying . . . *tamas*': *S.* (*alt.*) 'destroy our enemies *rajas* and *tamas*'. 'by . . . *sattva*': *M.* 'as Kapila, through the power of *sattva*'.

P. 195 (24) 'sovereign . . . worlds': 'Controller of the three *gunas*' (*Bālapr.*) *V.* reads 'adhipateh'.

(30) This verse, though found in the Gujarat mss. and commented upon by *S.*, *R.* and *M.*, is not accepted as genuine by *V.*, *Bālapr.* etc.
 'when . . . slumber': *R.* 'when I lay silent, because of a lover's quarrel'.

(31) Some coms (*Ĵ.*, *Dīp* etc.) treat the anger 'as merely assumed', (*ābhāsa*); while *M.* says that the real redemption came from Bhakti, not from hatred.

CH. XVII. P. 197 (15) 'Seeing . . . portents': *S.* (lit.) Seeing these and other portents'; *M.* suggests 'other' refers to earthquakes.

P. 198 (21) 'Vaijayanti': (*Vams.*) Garland of pearls of eight kinds; *R.* 'a wreath made of leaves and flowers'; *M.* 'a garland of flower strands woven of flowers'.

(23) 'driven to distraction': *S.* (*v. r.*) 'seeing that they were impotent'. *R.* (*v. r.*) suggests that he, being drunk, could not find the gods.

(26) 'hempen strand': *S.* (*alt.*) 'iron'.

CH. XVIII. (10) *M.* 'It is true that we haunt the waters (for Vishnu

lies on the water), and we are sought by the saintly. We are on the look-out for the likes of you'.

(11) 'what . . . Rasātala': *R.* 'with what was given to the people of Rasātala as their support'.

(19) 'fighting for a cow': *S. (alt.)* 'for the sake of the earth'; *M.* 'fighting, taking their stand on the ground'.

CH. XIX. P. 202-3 (14) When Garuda, having worsted the gods, carried off the pot of nectar, Indra hurled his thunderbolt at him. To demonstrate his formal veneration for him, Garuda voided just a feather, so that the Vajra might not prove totally infructuous.

P. 203 (22) 'Who . . . savanas': This is said of the Lord incarnate as Yajna-Varāha (*S.*). *R.* takes the reference to point to the Trivikrama incarnation's three footsteps in the three worlds; *M.* to the Jana, Tapa and Satyalokas; *V. C.*, to the Lord Who has the three parts of Dharma for His feet.

CH. XX. P. 205 (1) 'still . . . time': *S.* 'i. e. still contained in Īśvara'. *R.* (later half): 'What were the means that Manu adopted, setting an example to the latter-day creation so that they might realize the four ends of life'. *M.* 'Taking his stand on earth, what expedients did Manu devise to enable the latter-day creation to know the differences constituting *varṇas* and *āśramas*'.

P. 205 (7) This verse is spoken by Vyāsa; the next begins the Sūta's narration.

(13) 'quintets . . . rest': In foot-note (1) add 'the gods presiding over the organs'.

(14) 'aided . . . Lord': *R.* 'By the Lord's entering into it'. He says that the *pañchīkaraṇa* process is implied here.

(15) 'lifeless': Since the *jīvas* (*samashṭi* and *vyasṭi*) had not yet been roused in it; *M.* 'the Paramātmā not manifesting Himself in it, though He dwelt in it'.

(18) 'ignorance': *R.* 'Tamo-guna'; *M.* 'by means of the body called night'.

P. 207 (25) 'that form . . . blessings': *R.* 'that form which they are fit to see'.

P. 208 (36) 'head of hair . . .': *S. (v. r.)* 'gather up your dishevelled, lovely hair'.

CH. XXI. P. 211 (17) 'the world': i. e. men who are the slaves of desire (*S.*); 'Samsāris' (*R.*); 'material bodies and the organs' (*M.*) (18) In this description of the year, that stands for the inexorable passage of time, the 13 months (including the intercalary months), the 360 days, the six seasons, and the three four-month periods are figuratively set forth.

'serrated edges': (*lit.*) 'leaves'; *V.* says that unlike the ordinary cart-wheel, the wheel of time is made of a living tree which puts forth leaves in the form of minutes, seconds, etc.

'which . . . axle': *R. (alt.)* 'those who are caught up in the revolving cycle of old age, hunger and so on'; or 'the wheel of time which brings this revolution'.

(28) *R.* 'So long as your heart is given wholly in love to her, Manu's daughter will give herself to you lovingly, the years passing like a second.'

P. 213 (31) 'with . . . control': *M.* 'Putting yourself wholly in My hands'.

CH. XXII. P. 215 (2) 'From . . . embodiment': *M. (v. r.)* 'From the desire to protect us, Brahmā created the Brahmanas to whom the Vedas are all important'.

P. 216 (15) 'first . . . mode': *S. (alt.)* 'first, because the institution of marriage started with this'; *R. & M.* 'the Brāhma mode of marriage'.

CH. XXIII. P. 219 (6) 'You . . . way': *M. (v. r.)* (purport) 'You have not given your body the attention by way of bath etc. that is due to it, in order to please me by showing how that body has grown thin serving me'.

(7) 'single-mindedness': *R.* 'By the yoga of knowledge of the true nature of Ātmā and Prakṛti'.

(8) 'enjoyments': (*lit.*) 'dreams of enjoyments'; *R.* 'hopes of gain'. 'Beyond . . . importance': *M.* 'Beyond what may be achieved by extraordinary means such as the horse-sacrifice'.

(10) 'Great . . . progeny': *S. (v. r.)* 'which may be the means of faithful wives, wedded to spouses of supreme worth, gaining the esteem of the world (by bearing good sons)'.

P. 221 (38) 'whose glory . . . dimmed': *S.* renders *mahimā* as 'independence'; *M.* 'whose greatness was not diminished by his indulgence in pleasure'.

P. 222 (43) 'in all its divisions': *M.* renders *sva-samsthayā* as 'by his power of yogic contemplation'.

CH. XXIV. P. 224 (4) 'knowledge . . . heart': *M.* 'knowledge of the Paramātmān' or 'induce in you the resolve to practise *tapas*'.

P. 225 (26) 'Brahma': *M.* 'The pure One'.

P. 226 (33) 'the three-fold ego': *R.* 'He Who causes the three *guṇas* to grow and develop in the *jīva* who serves as His body in creation'; *M.* 'Who pervades the three elements, earth, water and fire' or 'Who is sought after by the three Vedas'.

(35) 'matters . . . concerns': *R.* 'matters concerning *punya*, and *karmas* for acquiring it'; *M.* 'in regard to knowledge of the truth'.

P. 227 (43) 'is absolutely . . . *guṇas*': *R.* 'is devoid of undesirable qualities, while It shines by virtue of all admirable attributes'; *M. (alt.)* 'activates the products of the *guṇas*, Mahat etc.'

(44) 'mind . . . inward': *M. (v. r.)* 'delighting in his Inner Ruler'.

CH. XXV. P. 227 (2) 'Though . . . glory': *S. (alt. for 'śruta-devasya')* 'Who shines in the Veda'.

P. 228 (4) *M.* reads 'Śukā replied', instead of 'Sūta . . .'. *S.* elaborates the verse thus: 'Maitreya was questioned by Vidura on the same point as you have raised, concerning the Self. . . .'

(9) *M.* (first half): 'Thou art the exalted Lord, the first of Purushas (such as Brahmā) Who confers all puissance and opulence on them.'

P. 229 (15) (First half) (*lit.*) 'The mind that is . . . enjoyment enslaves' etc.

P. 230 (27) 'Me . . . body': R. & M. 'the Lord, the Inner Ruler, (34) 'union with Me': R. 'attaining the same qualities as 'Mine'; M. 'mukti'.

P. 231 (36) 'brings liberation': R. 'takes one, when *prārabdhakarma* has been worked off, to Vaikuntha through the subtle Archirādimārga'; J. 'the state of Vishnu-Pārshada, which is subtle because it transcends Prakṛti'; V. 'union with the Lord'.

(39) 'the subtle body': S. (*lit.*) 'the *jīva* subject to the limiting adjuncts'; R. 'the body that garners the Dharmas germane to both worlds'; M. 'the *jīva* that goes to both worlds'.

CH. XXVI. P. 232 (3) 'The puruṣa . . .' M. takes this verse to refer to the Paramātmān.

(4) S. 'Prakṛti has two powers, *āvaraṇa* and *vikshepa*. The former as *avidyā* conditions the *jīva*. The latter, *Māyā*, is the instrument of the Paramātmān. In verses 4 to 8 the *jīva*'s falling into *samsāra*, being confounded by Prakṛti, is described.'

R. & M. have an extra verse between 3 and 4. R. explains it as meaning, 'Though the *jīva* has no birth or death, because of *punya* and *pāpa* he attributes to himself the characteristics of the body'. 'by chance': R. takes this to mean that the *jīva*'s encounter with Prakṛti is only occasional.

(8) 'it is the Puruṣa . . . agent and experiencer': S. distinguishes between the notion of agency and the undergoing of experience, and says that while the former is attributed to Prakṛti, the latter alone is attributed to Puruṣa (the *jīva*). To that extent the translation must be modified. J. however thinks that both enjoyment and agency are equally due to the Puruṣa. M. renders purport thus: 'While Prakṛti and Śrī, the Controller thereof, are responsible for the body, the organs and the mind, Vishnu alone is responsible for the *jīva*'s experience'.

P. 233 (9) 'entire . . . effect': (*alt.*) 'the world in its gross and subtle forms'.

(11) 'Brahma': M. 'Perfect, i. e. there is no other category outside it'; N. 'not different from the Brahma, being the product of Prakṛti, the power of Brahma'; V. 'the world, constituted of the 24 *tattvas*, is Brahma itself'.

P. 233 (16) 'being . . . nescience': (*Dīp.*) 'Prakṛti here means *avidyā*'; R. 'being in *samsāra* under the control of Pradhāna in its subtlest state or of the Paramātmān'; M. 'being under the bondage of Prakṛti'.

(17-18) S's *alt.* 'Kāla, widely known as Puruṣa, is the 25th. But some say that Kāla is the power of Puruṣa, since it causes the disturbance of the equilibrium of Prakṛti and brings fear (of *samsāra*) to the *jīva* who thinks of himself as agent'.

P. 234 (21) S. explains, 'What in *adhibhūta* is known as Mahat is known as *chitta* in the *adhyātma* (body). It is to be meditated upon as Vāsudeva. Its *adhishtātā* is the Kshetrajña'.

P. 235 (32) S. 'The ear is the perceiver of sound, not its product, having been produced before it.'

CH. XXVII. P. 239 (Between 4 & 5) After verse 4, *M.* has an extra verse, whose purport is, 'Attaining enlightenment and remembering that one destroys the soul by attachment to evil objects, he should not dwell on the objects of enjoyment, which are worthless and fleeting.' P. 240 (12 & 13) *R.* (purport) : 'Just as the same sunlight reveals both objects on earth and the sun's reflection in water, and likewise shows the sun shining in the sky as well as its image in water, it is the *jñāna* that is native to the *Ātman* that produces both the illusion that the body is the soul and also the true knowledge of the *Ātman*'.

P. 241 (24) 'has . . . freedom' : This is how 'Īśvara' in the verse is interpreted ; it is taken as referring to the freed *jīva*.

CH. XXVIII. P. 244 (20) *M.* says that concentration on each limb should be practised if one is unable to visualize and concentrate on the whole figure.

(21) 'great devotees' : *R.* (*alt.*) 'great' might qualify 'darkness' ; *M.* 'yogis' ; the darkness (he suggests) is ignorance.

P. 245-6 (36) 'final . . . mind' : *R.* 'By Bhakti practised by the mind freed from all objects'. (*v. r.*) It would mean 'By means of the continuing devotional activity of the mind'.

P. 246 (37) 'he would . . . Self' : *S.* (*alt.*) 'He would not see the body, from which he has realized the Self'.

P. 247 (45) There is an extra verse in *M.* : its purport, 'Getting up at the Brāhmic hour, one should meditate on the *Ātman*, the one Reality, Who is the Witness, and on the nature of the world, which is worthless and evanescent'.

CH. XXIX. P. 247 (5) 'ignorant men' : *M.* 'men who are ripe for the knowledge of the Paramātmān'.

(8) 'whether . . . jealousy' : *Vams.* cites from Brhannāradiya *P.* to show that these three classes 'represent three grades, each a little better than the other, of the *tāmasic* class'.

P. 248 (10) *S.* explains that the three classes of devotees, each class comprising men animated by one of three different motives (see verse 8 above), and practising the nine modes, 'Śravaṇam, Kīrtanam', and so on, result in 81 sub-types of devotion.

P. 249 (22) 'Worships . . . image' : *R.* points out that this refers only to worship offered by men devoid of *jñāna*.

(26) 'separate hungers' : *S.* takes the verse to point to the man who distinguishes between himself and another (or the Paramātmān) because the bodies are different ; *Ĵ.* to the man who satisfies his own hunger without bothering about another who is equally hungry ; *M.*, to the man who does not realize that the Inner Ruler is identical in all.

P. 250 (31) 'can . . . doubts' : The Mīmāṃsaka.

CH. XXX. P. 252 (9) 'which . . . in happiness' : *R.* 'which are inflexible'.

(12) 'destitution . . . ' : *R.* (*v. r.*) (He who does) 'no good deeds'.

(13) 'husbandmen . . . work' : *R.* (*v. r.* as *alt.*) 'farmers would not exchange a goat for a cow'.

P. 253 (23) 'dolorous way' : *R.* 'full of darkness' or 'way by which he who has done *tāmasic* deeds is taken' ; *V.* (*v. r.*) 'swiftly by force'.

CH. XXXI P. 254 (4) 'right . . . half' : S. citing *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, says that this assumes that the foetus is that of a male. M. has an extra verse, after 4, whose purport is, 'In the seventh month the *jīva*, endowed with knowledge, remembers fitfully his past deeds and births and realizes that his bondage is willed by Hari.'

(5) M. (v. r.) 'The creature grows like a diseased person (i. e. dependent for his sustenance on another)'.
P. 255 (10) 'brother . . . womb' : M. 'afflicted by doubts as to his future'.

(13) M. takes the verse to refer primarily to the Lord Who, though present in the body as Controller, is untouched by Prakṛti and unbound, unlike the *jīva*.

P. 257 (32) 'influenced . . . footsteps' : (alt.) 'If he, though himself on the path of righteousness, takes pleasure in evil company'.

CH. XXXII. P. 259 (4) 'the worlds' : Earth, heaven and the empyrean.

(7) 'Whose . . . everywhere' : S. 'Who is Perfection itself' ; R. & M. 'Who is Omniscient'. 'Supreme Lord' ; R. 'Who is Superior to Brahmā and the like' ; M. 'Who is the Overlord of the free and the unfree'.

P. 260 (8) 'Those who . . . Lord' : R. & M. 'yogis who meditate on the Paramātmā'.

(13) 'Sagunam Brahma' : R. 'The Brahma (Paramātmā) associated with the three *guṇas* in the state of equilibrium, i.e. the *chit* and the *achit* in subtle state.'

P. 261 (18) 'who . . . *samsāra*' : M. 'whose wisdom ravishes the mind'.

(29) 'Thus . . . Mahat' : S. and others treat the reference to the *tattvas* being evolved from Mahat as an example of the One Consciousness being seen as the world of multiplicity ; R. construes 'yathā' as 'yathāvat' i. e. 'the world of multiplicity is real'. He renders 'svarāt' as Brahmā ; M. as 'Indra'.

(37) 'four kinds' : 'sāttvika, rājasā, tāmasa and nirguṇa.'

CH. XXXIII. P. 263 (3) 'doing . . . Ruler' : R. takes 'Ātmesvara' to mean 'one who is not subservient to another'.

BOOK IV

CH. I. P. 267 (28) 'foremost . . . gods' : S. (v. r.) 'whom I sought to propitiate in various ways'.

(33) According to M. Soma was not an *aṁśa* of Brahmā, but was merely filled with his presence.

CH. II. P. 272 (2) 'How . . . hate him?' : S. (alt.) 'who could possibly hate him?'.

P. 273 (10) 'by . . . Vedic way' : S. (v. r.) 'who had fallen from the righteous path'.

(17) 'who said . . . word' : R. 'one who did not retaliate' ; M. 'who offered no opposition.'

P. 274 (25) M. (v. r.) describes the Veda as the 'daughter of Mukhya-Prāṇa' ; he also points out that 'the flowers of the Veda contain the seed of *mukti*.'

CH. III. P. 275 (3) 'contemptuously . . . Brahma': S. 'i.e. the Lord Śiva as well as His followers'; M. (v. r.) 'Daksha became confirmed in his addiction to *karma*'.

P. 277 (21) 'unconcerned . . . *jīva*': S. i.e. 'who are without egoism'; R. 'those who directly see the workings of the mind of the *jīva*'; M. 'who activate the senses of the *jīva*'.

(23) 'pure mind': S. (alt.) 'the Sattva-guna'; M. 'the bodies of Brahmā and the like'.

'I . . . Lord': (v. r.) 'I concentrate my mind on Him'.

CH. IV. P. 278 (4) 'fearlessly': S. (v. r.) 'feeling unhappy' (that she should go without Rudra's permission).

P. 279 (11) 'cause . . . being': S. (alt.) 'Who stands forth as all that is'.

(12) S. suggests that between those who find only faults and those who recognise only merits there is an intermediate class that recognises both faults and virtues. For this there seems no warrant in the text. M. (purport): 'The supremely great like you do not reckon the faults of others but make much of such merits as they may have. It is a pity that in this respect you have sinned against Rudra'.

P. 281 (30) After this verse, there are two extra verses in M. which represent Daksha as being remorseful over his cruelty.

CH. V. P. 282 (1) 'By . . . sacrifices': M. (v. r.) 'by Bhṛgu and others who presided over the sacrifice'.

(3) 'Black . . . many suns': M. (v. r.) 'who looked like the blood-red sun'.

P. 284 (21) 'king of Kalinga': M. 'Dantavakra'.

CH. VI. P. 285 (7) 'who . . . pacifying Him': S. (v. r.) 'who can offend against him'.

P. 288 (39) 'Yogi's band': R. 'in the path of Yoga'.

P. 289 (53) 'materials . . . share': M. 'the share known as 'Svish-takṛt'.

CH. VII. P. 291 (19) 'who has . . . hymns': The *Bṛhad* and the *R̥antarasamans* are the hymns referred to.

(24) 'Though . . . greatness': S. (alt.) 'They who were only His own *vibhūtis*'.

P. 293 (31) Other commentators take the sense to be, 'This form of Thine cannot be seen by those who perceive with the senses'.

P. 294 (37) 'Do these . . . apprehend Thee?': the answer being that they do not (S.). J., V. C. & N. take the answer to be, 'Yes, they do, but that is because Thou hast endowed them for the nonce with the power to see'. R. & M. take the answer simply to be, 'Yes, of course they do apprehend Thee'.

P. 295 (41) 'five-fold form' i.e., as 'Agnihotrā, Darśa-Pūrnamāsa, Chāturmāsya and Paśu-soma' (S.); 'Dakshinā, Āhavanīya, Gārhapatya, Sabhya and Āvasathya' (R.); 'Yajna, Yajna-purusha, Yagnesa, Yagnabhāvana and Yajna-bhuha' (M.).

P. 296 (43) 'All are . . . fractions of a fraction of Thee'. M. (v. r.) 'All hope for blessings from Thee'.

(46) 'sacrifice of both kinds': S's alts. for 'kratu' are 'the decision to offer sacrifice' and 'whose propitiation is through *yajna*'.

CH. VIII. P. 297 *M.* has an extra verse after 4, which says that the progeny of Adharma lead to *samsāra* and should therefore be avoided, particularly by *sannyasis*.

P. 303. *M.* has in extra verse after 77, which says that the gods tried to frighten Dhruva and make him give up his penance, by such illusions as serpents, evil spirits etc.

CH. IX. P. 305 (13) 'I know not . . . speech': *R.* 'But I know, too, by Thy grace, Thy subtle transcendental form endowed with all auspicious attributes, over which men differ, (some regarding it as material, others not, and so on)'; *M. (v. r.)* 'Nor do I know Thy subtle form, which baffles speech, for even Lakshmi, Brahmā and others do not know it'.

P. 307 (21) 'threshing floor': *M.* renders 'medhi' as 'the mortar in which oil seeds are pressed'.

(25) 'from which . . . returns': *R. & M. (v. r.)* 'from which the sannyasin does not return'; *R.* rendering 'yati' as 'he whose mind is always active in pursuit of his aim'.

(28) 'beyond . . . sincerity': *S.* explains, 'beyond the reach of men who entertain desires'. Others, taking 'māyāvinah' as descriptive of Hari, render it as 'Who is full of compassion' or 'Who confounds the world by means of the forms that His Māyā takes, i. e. wife, son, wealth etc.' (*Vams.*)

CH. X. P. 311 (2) 'a . . . daughter': *S. (alt.)* ' (had a son Utkala) who ravished the minds of women'; *M. (v. r.)* 'a lord of Yoga'.

P. 312 (22) 'there . . . attack': *R.* 'that the enemy might retaliate'.

CH. XI. P. 314 (13) 'in . . . beings': *R., V. C.* etc. 'looking upon them as one would look upon oneself'; *M.* 'behaving as a friend towards a friend and an enemy towards an enemy'.

(14) 'If . . . body': *R.* 'freed from anger and other such evil qualities while he lives, and when he comes to die, totally freed from the products of what is not the *jīva*'; *M. (v. r.)* 'totally freed from his obsession with *jīva*-hood.'

P. 315 (28) 'directing Him': The tr. follows *Dip.* on *S. S.*'s (*alt.*) 'restraining the senses'; *M.* '(the Lord) Whose eyes are turned to every creature'.

(29) 'who . . . enmity': *R.* 'Who is seated in the impartite *jīva*'; *M. (v. r.)* 'to Whom yogis who have abjured all strife are devoted.'

CH. XII. P. 318 (26) 'that . . . Vishnu': *R.* 'that exalted place associated with Vishnu'; this is not to be confounded with Vaikuntha'; *M.* 'that place where are the Śiśumara and Dhruva.'

CH. XIV. P. 328 (41) 'his austerities': *M.* 'his Brahmanical *tejas*'.
(46) 'dwarf': *R.* 'a man called Bāhuka'.

CH. XV. P. 329 (2 & 3) 'fraction': *R. & M.* hold that Pṛthu and his consort were not *aśvas* like Matsya, for instance, but *āvesa-avatāras*.
P. 330 (17) 'sword . . . scabbard': *M.* 'a sword called Dasachandra (ten moons).'

CH. XVI. P. 331 (5) 'will . . . diverse functions': *S.* 'will show their different forms'; *R.* 'the extraordinary qualities which

were innate to him and which enabled him to discharge the various functions'; *M.* 'will show their presence in the shape of powers'.

CH. XVII. P. 333 (2) 'merchant guilds': *M.* 'bodyguards'.
 P. 334 (10) 'you . . . Ruler': *M.* (*v. r.*) 'guide and direct us (so that we may be able to find food etc.).'
 P. 336 (36) 'lordly . . . circumstances': *S.* 'devotees of Hari';
R. 'incarnations of Hari'.

CH. XVIII. P. 337 (9) 'in my . . . calf': *R.* 'in my love for you'.
 'milk pail': *M.* 'particular mode of milking'.
 (14) 'milk . . . senses': The Vedas have to be heard by the ear, retained by the mind and uttered by the mouth (*S.*).

CH. XIX. P. 340 (14) 'Dharma . . . form': *M.* (*v. r.*) 'looking upon him as one possessed of a sinful body (i.e. with matted hair etc.), with whom it would not be lawful to fight.'
 P. 341 (33) 'you . . . Self': *R.* (*v. r.*) 'you should not think ill of Mahendra'.

CH. XX. P. 343 (7) *R.* has a verse extra after this, whose purport is, 'The characteristics of the body etc. (such as youth or age, stoutness or leanness) do not inhere in the witness, the *jīva*. His being free from these properties is what differentiates him from the body. This is clearly seen in deep sleep'.

(11) 'controlling . . . the senses': *S.* interprets 'jñānakriyā' as meaning 'the organs of sense and action'.

P. 346 (31) After vs. 31 *M.* has two extra verses: (purport) 'You have done well, in that you don't seek blessings; being devoted to Me, you make no difference between heaven, hell and liberation. Your compliance with my wishes in renouncing anger is the best worship you could offer Me.'

CH. XXI. P. 347 (11) 'he enjoyed the fruits': *S.* explains that he did not engage in new *karma*, which in its turn would bring its fruit, and thus perpetuate *samsāra*.

P. 348 (16) 'high shanks': *M.* (*v. r.*) 'high-pitched voice'.

P. 349 (30) *S.* explains, 'Dispensing the fruits of action is not possible to *karma* itself, which is material, or to gods who are themselves subject to the Inner Ruler; nor can the fact that actions of the same sort are attended by different results in the cases of different men and by no results at all in some, be explained except on the supposition that there is a Paramount and absolute Power. Other causes may be operative to some extent, but His will is the deciding factor'.

(32) *R.* (purport) 'He who is steady in his devotion, strengthened by *vairāgya* and knowledge of the truth of the Self, as distinguished from *Prakṛti*, is freed from all taint, takes refuge in His feet and is ever freed from *samsāra*'.

CH. XXII. P. 353 (12) 'have . . . faith': *S.* (*alt.*) 'whose great vows others, while yet young, or though ignorant, follow'.

P. 355 (25) 'all . . . end': That end is the cultivation of distaste for what is other than the *Ātman* and delight in the *Ātman* which is none

other than the Nirguna Brahma spoken of in verse 21. The translation is based on a re-arrangement of verses 22 to 25, to make it more compact.

(36) After vs. 36, *M.* has three extra verses, whose purport is 'The universe, which is real, is created, maintained and destroyed by Hari's mind, even as the things seen in a dream are the result of subliminal impressions. So when Hari does not will it, the universe is retracted into its causes. Aspirants to liberation attain Vishnu, Who is the Turiya. The sage, who realizes the relationship of master and servant that there is between God and the soul, sunders the bond of Māyā, attains Hari and lives in bliss. The goal he reaches is the Brahma where obtains neither any of the three states nor that of *jivan-mukti*'.

CH. XXIII. P. 359 (11) 'Ego... *jīva*': *R.* 'Prakṛti'; *M.* 'the inner and outer senses' or 'the subtle body'.

(13) 'merging... Ātman': *R.* 'merging the Ātman in the Paramātmān'; *V. C.* 'merging the mind in the body of the Lord's attendant (which would be his in Vaikuntha)'.

(17) *S.* explains that the merging of the mind in the senses is due to the fact that it is, though not their product, dependent on them for knowledge of the external world. Thus it is an exception to the rule, noted in the previous verse, that products are merged in their cause. He notes a (*v. r.*) 'nabhah' (*ākāśa*) for 'manas'.

CH. XXIV. P. 362 (7) 'immaculate': *S.* explains 'hamsa' as 'He who dispels the sorrows of His devotees' and 'kuśalam' as 'puṇyam'.

(11) 'as... Śukī': *S.* relates a legend about Agni having fallen in love with the wife of the Seven Sages at a sacrifice; his own wife Svāhā, noticing this, had taken the form of the sages' wife and united with him, and then taking the form of a female parrot, deposited his virility in a clump of reeds. *M.* says Suki was a princess. *S.* notes a variant reading, meaning 'streaming drops of ghee'.

P. 364 (25) 'His... gold': *M.* (*v. r.*) 'His body like the touchstone red-hot from the fire'.

P. 368 (63) 'sages': *M.* 'the organs of sense'.

(63) 'Therefore he... *jīva*': *R.* 'He, the Lord, Who as Inner Ruler of the *jīva*, is present in these bodies, is known as Puruṣa.'

(67) After this verse *M.* has an extra one whose purport is: 'It is because of the touch of His feet in deep sleep that the *jīva* enjoys blissfulness for a brief while, but he does not remember Him when he wakes; He can be known only by sustained devotion'.

CH. XXV. P. 370 (9) 'old legend': *M.* explains 'purātana', as 'having reference to the body'.

(10) 'whose doings... world': *S.* (*v. r.*) 'who was known by His work of activating and controlling the *jīva*'.

P. 373 (56) While *S.* & *R.* take 'Puranjani' as representing the intellect, *M.* takes it more narrowly as 'evil disposition'.

CH. XXVI. P. 374 *S.* says that while the previous chapter deals with the states of waking and sleep the first ten verses of this deal with the dream state. And so does *R.* *M.* takes these verses to refer to the state of waking.

P. 375 (11) *M.* says that this marks the transition from waking to sleep, while *R.* says it means waking from dream.

CH. XXVII. P. 376 *S.* This chapter deals with the *jīva*'s experience in *samsāra*.

CH. XXVIII. P. 380 (22) 'cravenly': Because the *jīva* is in truth the immortal Ātman and death is powerless over him.

CH. XXIX. P. 384 (5) 'through...senses': *M.* (v. r.) 'through the eyes'.

P. 388 (45) After this there are two extra verses in *M.* Their purport: 'All creatures are by nature endowed with intelligence for the maintenance of life. What is man's superiority in this? He alone is superior to other men, who discards all attachment to the body, and so on, and by cleaving to the Ātman frees himself from *samsāra*'.

P. 392 (79) After this there are two extra verses in *M.* Their purport: 'The moment you develop intense devotion to Hari and compassion towards all creatures, who are not opposed to the truth, and realize that the Ātman, freed from the body etc., is of the nature of knowledge and bliss, you will gain emancipation from *samsāra*. When that happens, the fruits of *karma* will vanish, since all created things like this world are evanescent like dreams. The one abiding Reality is the Parabrahma, the secret hidden in the Vedas.'

CH. XXX. P. 395 (24) 'knowledge...*samsāra*': *R.* 'Who is the object of contemplation by the discriminating intellect, which dispels sins'; *M.* 'Who destroys sin and is of the nature of Jñāna'.

CH. XXXI. P. 399 (15) 'the waters': *M.* (v. r.) 'the waters and rays'.

P. 400 (22) After this *M.* has four extra verses, in which Nārada recalls how Dhruva, the Prachetases' ancestor, had as a boy of five won the favour of Vishnu, and asks them to propitiate the Lord who is seated in the heart, by following Sri Rudra's teaching.

BOOK V

CH. I. P. 403. P. 406 (35) 'six disabilities': *S.* (alt.) 'the senses'; *R.* 'desire, hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age and death.'

CH. II. P. 409 (22) 'her... joyously': *M.* 'This shows that the world of the Apsarases is that of the manes'; *Ĵ.* 'that in that world the manes exercise authority'; *N.* 'those who get entry into that world are welcomed by the manes'.

CH. III. P. 412 (14) 'invincible Māyā': *M.* treats 'invincible' as vocative, and interprets 'his intellect clouded etc.' as meaning 'his intellect being unable to comprehend the truth re: Hari cannot contemplate Him properly'.

CH. V. P. 418 (15) 'For... well?': *R.* has not got this half verse. (20) 'Bharata... brother': *M.* the Lord Hari, Who is intent on sustaining all creatures and is the support of all'.

CH. VII. P. 426 (14) This verse is regarded as bringing out the meaning of the *Gāyatri-mantra*. *R.* takes the verse to refer to the

exalted Lord Vishnu Himself. So does *M.* too, who translates latter half thus: 'We praise Thee That art the Lord ever free, Who destroys all grief and is the master of the *jīvas*'.

'jīva... desires': *ḥ.* 'evil desires'; he renders the latter half thus: 'He protects me by drawing my mind towards Himself'.

CH. VIII. P. 429 (30) 'village... sal trees': *R.* 'hermitage called Sālagrāma.'

CH. X. P. 430. (2) 'extent... length': *M.* reads 'yuga' (i.e. the length of a yoke).

P. 435 (12) 'Still... King': *S.* explains, 'If you still entertain such wrong notions, I shall do what you want me to do'; *R.* 'you may not like to face the fact, but that is the truth'.

CH. XVII. P. 460 (21) 'is... vicissitudes': i. e., 'is not subject to creation, destruction etc.'; *R.* 'is not subject to the three *guṇas*'.

CH. XVIII. P. 461 (3) 'wishes to live': 'on the wealth left by the dead father and son', should be understood (*S.*).

CH. XIX. P. 468 (11) 'Who... Teacher': *R.* 'The Lord of peerless purity Who is endowed with all auspicious attributes and is the supreme teacher'.

CH. XX. P. 473 (18) *M.* reads 'whey' for 'milk'.

CH. XXIV. P. 487 (20 & 21) 'which aspirants... means': *R.* suggests that even these arduous means, such as *karma* and *yoga*, procure liberation only by the *bhakti* that they engender. 'who brings... soul': *R. (v.r.)* 'Who is the soul in all and gives even Himself to His devotees, and Who is supremely dear to oneself'.

CH. XXV. P. 489 (1) 'because... seen': *R.* 'Who enables the knower and the known to realize the *jīva*, which is beyond the reach of the senses, by making them look upon themselves as 'I'; *M.* 'Who, as the ego, is the cause of the delusion that makes the *jīva* look upon the body as the soul'.

BOOK VI

CH. I. P. 500 (27) *M.* would interpret this verse as meaning that when the time for his death came Ajāmila, by the Lord's grace, was vouchsafed a vision of Him in his own heart as a child of five years. (42) 'cows': *M.* 'water'.

(48) *R.* takes the verse to refer to the Lord Vishnu Himself, the Inner Ruler of the *jīva*.

CH. II. P. 504 (10) Interpreting this and also 14, *M.* again emphasises that even involuntary utterance of Hari's name can be productive of good only through generation of devotion.

CH. III. P. 510 (24) *S.* explains that the repeated utterance of Hari's names and qualities, accompanied by faith and devotion, roots out the tendencies left in the mind by past sins; merely to dispel one's sins what Ajāmila did was quite sufficient. *R.* and *M.* take the verse to mean that the recital of Hari's names and qualities dispels sins,

(27) 'Neither . . . them': R. & M. (v.r.) 'They are free from fear, and we have no power over them'.

CH. IV. P. 514 (26) 'Who manifests . . . recollection': S. explains that this is in the state of *samādhi*; neither in sleep, where the mind is extinct for the time, nor in the waking state, when it is distracted. R. says that it is the state of deep sleep when the mind is inactive, that is referred to as that in which the *jīva* realizes the Paramātmān. (27) 'discovered . . . *gunas*': S. (alt.) 'discovered as the 28th principle, hidden by His own 27 limiting adjuncts'; they see the Paramātmān present in the heart, as distinct from the *jīva*, the abode of the ego'. By 'nine powers' he understands Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Mahat, the ego and the five subtle elements. R. takes 'nine powers' to refer to Śrī, Puṣṭi, Kānti, etc.; M. to 'Vimalā, Utkarṣaṇi etc.'.

CH. V. P. 518 (17) 'marvellous support': R. (v.r.) 'constitute a wonderful body for the Paramātmān'; M. 'marvellous house of the 25 *tattvas*'; J. (v.r.) 'marvellous mirror of the 25 *tattvas*'. (18) 'distinguishes . . . liberation': R. takes this to refer to the Lord, and interprets 'vivikta-padam' as meaning 'Who is seated in the cave of the heart'.

CH. VII. P. 525 (17) 'as he pondered': R. (v.r.) 'beset by care'.

CH. VIII. P. 531 (32 & 33) R. 'The Lord, as the Inner Ruler of the universe of *chit* and *achit*, which He has for His body, is uncouched by such differences as distinguish men, gods etc. But by his own free choice He wears ornaments and takes many forms, which are all real. May He, as truly, protect us'. M. says the ornaments etc. are spoken of as his 'śaktis' because He is present in each of them with the characteristic power with which they are associated. V.C. suggests that the ornaments etc. are of the stuff of *chit*. The Lord adopts them from the desire to gratify the wishes of His devotees.

CH. IX. P. 534 (31) R. 'Who grants the length of life needed for performing sacrifices etc., Who protects us with His discus ever ready, Whose auspicious names dispel fear'; M. 'Who binds the *jīvas* to *samsāra*, Who is incarnate as Sudarṣana (discus) for the destruction of all catastrophes and Who is signified by all names'.

P. 535 (32) 'beyond . . . *gunas*': R. 'beyond heaven, hell and *moksha*'; M. 'Who grantest Vaikuntha that transcends heaven, the world of the manes and hell'.

CH. XI. P. 542 (8) 'thicket of reeds': R. (v.r.) 'grove of palms'; M. (lotus bed).

P. 544 (25) 'Treasure-house . . . attributes': M. (v.r.) 'That art free from partiality and prejudice'.

CH. XII. P. 544 (3) 'planet or meteor': S. 'planet and meteor'. R. 'the sun and burning charcoal'.

P. 545 (7) 'who . . . soul': S. (alt.) 'Whose body is not under their control'.

P. 546 (19) 'won fulfilment': M. 'have become a *jīvan-mukta*'.

(35) 'Lord . . . worlds': R. Śrī Vaikuntham' and (with v.r.) 'the

place gained by the liberated'; *M.* 'the world of the Vidyādhara— from which he had fallen'.

CH. XV. P. 556. (23) 'as illusory . . . reverie': *R.* 'fleeting like the wonderful happenings in a dream'; only they last a little longer'.

(26) 'therefore . . . activity': After this there are four extra verses in *M.* telling a story relating to a king Bhoja, bearing upon the need for cultivating detachment. He imagined in his dream that he had been eating his enemy's vomit. He was reduced to such helpless misery by this thought that his enemies destroyed his armies, and he lost everything including his head. When he woke up, he was so filled with disgust that he renounced, and by contemplation achieved such complete absorption in the Brahma that he totally forgot his body'.

CH. XVI. P. 558 (10) *R.* takes this to refer the Paramātmā.

CH. XVII. P. 565 (19) 'Neither . . . think so': *R.* explains, 'Karma is responsible for pleasure and pain, but as it is material and lasts only while it is being done, it cannot produce fruits at a future time. It is therefore the Lord's grace or the punishment He inflicts for infraction of Dharma that causes pleasure and pain'.

BOOK VII

CH. I. P. 577 (6) 'free . . . attributes': *S.* 'free from the *gunas* of Prakṛti'; *R.* 'free from all undesirable qualities'. 'acts . . . attacked': i.e. by prompting the actions of the gods and the *Asuras*, for example, against each other. *S.* (*alt.*) 'is the cause of the mutual animosity between the warring gods and *Asuras*'.

(9) 'manifold . . . media': *R.* 'He shines bright and unspotted in the bodies He inhabits, as fire etc. are in the media through which they are manifest'.

P. 578 (10) 'When He . . . bodies': *R.* & *M.* 'As the Inner Ruler'.

P. 580 (31) *S.* explains that though six types are mentioned in verse 30, in this verse, in the context of Vena, only five are spoken of, because the *Gopis*' kind of love cannot be experienced by a man. And Vena did not fall into any of the other classes, because he lacked intense contemplation. *M.* holds that is 'passion' did not fructify in *bhakti*, which alone can bring *moksha*,

CH. II. P. 583 (22) 'material bodies': *S.* (*alt.*) 'happiness or misery'.

(24) 'so does . . . sorrows': *M.* When the *jīva* is under the sway of the *gunas* and acting through his mind and senses, he attributes even to the Lord disabilities like his own and the possession of a body'.

P. 585 (41) 'All bodies . . . nature': *R.* (purport) 'The Lord allots to all creatures the bodies earned by their past *karmas*. While He is present in the body as the Inner Ruler, He is not affected by its qualities, while the *jīva* is, and thus falls into *samsāra*'.

CH. III. P. 587 (11) 'How little . . . ends': *R.* renders 'Vaishnava' as 'Vaikuntha' and says that Hiranyakaśipu betrays his *Asuric* and perverse ignorance in assuming that Vaikuntha is transient, while Brahmā's position is eternal; *M.* takes 'Vaishnava' to mean 'the world created by Brahmā'.

P. 588 (20) 'deterred . . . minds': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'would be impossible for those who have not controlled their minds'.

P. 589 (29) 'functioning . . . breath': *R.* 'as the Sustainer and Controller of the chief vital breath'; *M.* 'functioning along with the chief vital breath, as Controller etc.'.

P. 590 (33) 'the physical . . . supremacy': *R.* (*purport*): 'The physical universe is Thy gross body; the Four-faced Brahmā is Thy subtle body, through which Thou enjoyest the world of the senses'.

CH. IV. P. 590 (2) 'extremely . . . obtain': *M.* 'which may ultimately result in grief'; *V.C.* 'which might ultimately fail to fructify'.

P. 591 (13) 'with . . . Gods': *M.* 'with the exception of the Ādityas, Vasus and Rudras, *i.e.* all the gods who receive oblations'.

P. 592 (23) 'With . . . air': After this *R.* has an extra verse to the effect that they recited the following *mantra*: 'Salutations to the exalted and compassionate Lord, the Inner Ruler, Who is compact of Knowledge and Bliss and rids of fear those who put their trust in Him'. (26) 'Seeing (or hearing) of Me': The words in brackets are suggested because the gods heard only a disembodied voice; *M.* 'knowledge concerning Me'; *R.* 'My gracious glance'; *Ṣ.* 'feeling My presence'; *V.C.* '(Your suffering will end) when you see Me emerge'.

CH. V. P. 595 (5) 'infatuation . . . mine': *R.* 'By attachment to the objects of the senses, due to false identification of the body with the soul and notions of independence'.

Pp. 596-7 (23 & 24) *R.* points out that Bhakti is unintermittent contemplation inspired by love and the 'nine signs' are seen in the *bhakta* who is established in such loving contemplation. Learning the Bhakti-śāstra, one should practise what is learnt and dedicate his acts of devotion to the Lord.

'to look . . . friend': *S.* 'to put his trust wholly in Him'; *Ṣ.* 'to be ever zealous in his interest as a friend'.

'to surrender . . . hands': *S.* 'resigning even the care and support of his own body into his hands as one does that of a cow into the hands of the purchaser'; *R.* 'to be continuously aware of his total dependence on Him'; *M.* 'to ever remember that the Lord is present in himself as the Inner Ruler'.

'he . . . various ways': *Ṣ.* 'If as the result of his study a man comes to dedicate directly to the Lord the *bhakti* which expresses itself in these nine ways, and not as a by-product of his pursuit of knowledge, or Dharma, then that study is worth while'. He argues that steadiness in one of the nine modes is to be preferred to the pursuit of all of them, as that way the mind would be saved from distraction. (46) 'like Sunahsepa . . . him': *S.* (*alt.*) 'He will not go against his natural disposition any more than the dog will forfeit his tail'.

CH. VI. P. 600. In some old *mss.* there are five verses before the 1st verse of this chapter. These are commented upon by *M.* Their purport (according to *M.*) is as follows: 'O children, listen to what I shall say, which will be conducive to your good. Remember your dead friends and do not be heedless. In days past even children did not neglect their true interests. Even what the Guru says should not be accepted if it seeks to make out evil to be good. Let him not

confide in that teaching which does not wake him up when he has plunged in the slumber of ignorance; if he does, he will be like the blind following the blind. Who is the friend or the foe of one in this life, or who may be looked upon as neither the one nor the other? That is as true in your case as in mine. Then what is the use of studying polity? Rare indeed is the man who, pursuing the Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti Dharmas without desire for the fruit, is engaged in unintermittent devotion to the Lord'.

(8) 'He...infatuation': After this there is an extra verse in *M*; its purport: Dissensions break out even among relations, if they are householders.

P. 602 (21-23) *R.* treats these verses as an exhortation to realize the *artha-panchaka*, with a view to making *samāśrayaṇam* ('seeking asylum with the Achārya'). *Purport*: 'The Paramātman, or the Reality Who has the *jīva* and *achit* for His body, enters all creatures and controls them according to their *karmas* and should be seen as pervading all that exists, Himself untouched by change and compact of knowledge and bliss. Hidden from the view of the *samsāri* by Māyā, He may be attained through the grace of the Achārya'.

(22) *M.* (purport): 'The one Hari is seen as limited because He is the Inner Ruler, and unlimited as the Brahma That envelops all'.

CH. VII. P. 604 (11) 'devotion... Ananta': *S.* 'to me, who am dear to the Lord (or who love the Lord)'; *M.* 'out of devotion to Narayana, Who is dear to Ananta'.

(18) 'six stages': 'A creature is born, it exists, it grows, it changes, it declines and it perishes'.

(19) *R.* take this verse as referring to the individual soul. The analogy of fruit and tree in verse 18, makes it clear that the soul is not affected by the changes the body undergoes. But it might be affected by the circumstances of its own origination etc. This is refuted by this verse.

P. 605 (22) 'number... eight': *S.* 'Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahamkāra and the five tan-māntrās; 'modifications': the eleven organs, including mind and the gross elements.

CH. VIII. P. 612 (42) 'sacrificial... due': *S.* 'The offerings made to Indra and other gods, are really made to the Lord as the Inner Ruler of all of them.' *M.* 'sacrificial offerings that are our due'.

CH. IX. P. 615 (1) 'unapproachable... wrath': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'Who seemed in a blazing wrath, but was (in the eyes of the wise) the sum of wisdom'.

(5) 'those... serpent': *M.* 'those whose intellects are eclipsed by the serpent time'.

(6) 'gaining... Brahma': *R.* & *M.* 'realizing the truth of the Paramātman and of one's own soul'.

P. 616 (11) 'does... sake': *R.* (*v.r.*) 'The Lord did not prescribe worship for His own sake; but, being compassionate, He desired the enlightened to worship Him for their own sake'.

(12) 'nescience': *R.* & *M.* 'by Prakṛti'.

(13) 'All... others': *M.* 'We Asuras as well as Brahmā and others, are here to do Thy will; but while they are not afraid, we are'.

(16) 'in . . . cruelty': *S. i.e.* 'born among the Asuras': *R.* 'Caught in the toils of egotism which obscure my true Self, which is wholly dependent on Thee'.

P. 617 (19) *M. (v.r.)* 'Thou art as sure a protection to those sufferers who beseech Thy mercy as parents are to their children' etc.

(20) 'high and low': *S.* 'Powers like Brahmā or any one of the latter-day creation-like us'; *M.* 'Time or Brahmā'.

(21) 'who has cut . . . Thee': *S.* 'Who does not worship Thee'.

'It . . . *samsāra*': *R. (alt.)* and *M.* 'The wheel of *samsāra* which has the mind for nave, and for spokes the activities of the ten organs of sensation and action, the five life-breaths and the mind'.

P. 618 (22) 'Thy . . . alike': *S.* 'properties . . . intellect': Happiness, misery, desire, covetousness, etc.'; *R.* 'Thou controller Prakṛti's power of creation of multifarious *jīvas* by Thy essential power which is untouched by the qualities of Prakṛti, Thy body, and Thou art time too'.

P. 619 (29) 'make good . . . sages': *S.* (in commenting on VII, viii-18) has suggested that this might refer to Sanaka and other sages, or to Nārada, as well as to Prahlāda and even Hiranyakaśipu.

'just . . . element': *S.* explains that the point made here is that the effect is not essentially different from the cause. Just as the tree is not in essence different from the seed and the seed from the earth, and the earth itself from its subtle principle.

(31) *R. (purport)*: 'It is delusion to speak of the *jīva* as identical with the Lord; all that is meant is that the Lord is the Cause of the world of *chit* (*jīva*) and *achit* (*Prakṛti*) changing from its subtle state in Himself into the visible world'. In the example, with (*v.r.*), he renders the first part as meaning, 'just as the various divisions of time, such as morning, noon and so on, are not different from the continuous stream of time'.

M. (purport): 'What is wholly dependent on another for its existence is spoken of as not being different from it, e.g., the tree and what burns it is not different from time, the instrument of the Lord'.

P. 622 (48) 'the ego': *S. (alt.)* 'the gods'; *R.* 'the intellect which favours the rise of knowledge'.

CH. X. P. 623 (8) 'body': *R.* 'the individual soul'.

(9) 'elevated . . . magnificence': *R.* 'attains release by developing those attributes which are Thine'.

P. 624 (12) 'dedicating . . . *karma*': *S.* suggests that '*karma*' here might refer even to the act of worship; *R.* that it means 'the unexpended fruits of past *karma*'.

CH. XIII. P. 634 (5) *S.* explains that while in deep sleep the soul is enveloped by *taṃas* and in the states of waking and dream it is distracted, it is free from both these disturbances at the point when he is about to fall asleep or about to awake. That (says *S.* quoting a work on yoga) is the most favourable time for observing the true state of the soul. *R.* takes the 'sandhi' to refer to the dream state, and 'Mhṛt' to the Lord's *sankalpa*, and says that one should realize that bondage and liberation are due to it, while the soul is essentially free. *M.* states that both bondage and liberation are real.